

Political Affairs

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Political Affairs

**Theoretical Journal of
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Zorya Schwartz, Business Manager

Cover: Seymour Joseph

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Ideological Conference of the Communist Party, USA

July 14-16, 1989
Chicago, Illinois

When the world undergoes rapid, qualitative change, so must people's concept of society. It is a time of rapid ideological development and clashes in the world of ideas of the capitalist class and the working class.

We are calling a special Communist Party conference on *The Clash of Ideas in a Changing World*, to set our ideological sails to catch the winds of change, to run with the storms, and to keep from being blown off course.

In preparation for this conference, we call on the Party to examine and place the process of changes in society within a scientific framework, within the framework of Marxism-Leninism. We call for a critical examination and refutation of efforts of reactionary forces to use the process of change to justify their own narrow class ends.

Our guidelines are:

1 • In a society divided into classes with fundamentally conflicting interests, politics, religion, art, morality, ethics, aesthetics and philosophy are, as Karl Marx emphasized, "forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out."

2 • Despite the great variety of developments from country to country, history has a direction. Taken as a whole, its direction is away from a capitalist monopoly of property and power, and towards a democratic and socialist future.

We urge the Party to make intensive use of the period of conference preparation. Let us examine, specifically, the trends in thinking of our co-workers, neighbors, the movements in which we participate, the people as a whole.

Let us consider how to clarify our political and ideological concepts.

Let us consider how to foster anti-racist trends and combat the racism which is being spread in new guises.

Let us consider how to answer the challenges to socialism and utilize the growing interest it arouses.

Let us consider the relation of the working-class movement to multi-class movements for peace and the preservation of humanity and our planet's environment.

Let us especially strengthen our understanding of the role of the Communist Party as the cutting edge of the struggles of the working class, as the initiator of actions and leader of people.

Let us make this conference a contribution to the development of working-class consciousness.

Let us sharpen our ideological weapons in the clash of ideas and thereby strengthen our Party and its unique contributions.

Let us consider new ways to express our revolutionary ideology to win the hearts and minds of millions.

To these ends, we call for all Communists to immerse themselves in thought and discussion so that our conference will bear ideological fruit for the future of our class, our people and our country.

THE NATIONAL BOARD OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY, USA

Some Aims and Guidelines for the CPUSA Ideological Conference

GUS HALL

The National Board of the Communist Party, USA has issued the statement that appears on the preceding page, dealing with the ideological conference of the CPUSA, to be held July 14 to 16, 1989, at the University of Illinois, Circle Campus. These are the remarks which Gus Hall, National Chairman, presented to the National Board as an opening for the Board's discussion of the purpose, focus and guidelines for the pre-conference discussion period and the conference itself.

Change is an inherent characteristic of all that exists. Most of the time, change is slow and evolutionary. But there are times when the process speeds up and takes on new qualities. We are now in one of those moments.

In a time of fast-paced qualitative political and economic changes, it becomes necessary for Communists to take a fresh look at our ideological outlook. To refresh, and to update our Communist ideology, to make any necessary adjustments and to invigorate and strengthen our workingclass ideology is the main purpose of our Party's upcoming ideological conference.

The ultimate aim of this conference should be to raise the overall ideological level of the whole Party. The conference should thereby improve our Party's ability to fight and lead people's movements.

The pre-conference discussion period can be as important as the conference itself—if it is well planned, and if it involves all levels of the Party, leadership and membership.

There is a difference between a political conference and an ideological conference.

WHAT KIND OF CONFERENCE?

Ideological thought patterns cannot be placed into a precise, static, or abstract body of thought. Ideology draws on most areas of human thought and is molded by political, philosophical, cultural, theoretical, moral and aesthetic bodies of thought. But it is molded along sharp class lines.

Like a flower draws on the nutrients in the soil, on the rain that falls and on the sun that shines, ideology draws on other bodies of thought. But, like the flower, it is not the sum total of the soil, rain and sun. Ideology is far more. It is different than the added total of its parts. Politics, on the other hand, deals more specifically with everyday political events, with political trends, tactics and mass moods.

Ideological discussion demands much deeper thought. This is because such discussion is not dealing with everyday events, but with how people think about and deal with these events. Of course we should draw some lessons from our everyday experiences and discuss the cumulative effect of these events. But we should try to deal with people's more basic thought patterns. Although there will be some overlapping between ideology and questions of politics and tactics, we should try to avoid this.

Rather than discussing day-to-day events, we should deal more specifically with the direction of political and ideological trends in the working class, among the African-American, Puerto Rican, Mexican-American, American Indian, Asian-Pacific peoples, as well as in the women's and youth movements.

Although it is necessary to defend and argue for correct concepts, we should put

more emphasis on exposing and discussing *wrong* ideas and trends. Positive trends are more easily identified. Negative and wrong trends take more digging and probing to discover, formulate and argue against.

We should give thought not only to bourgeois ideological trends in general, but focus on how they penetrate into the working class and people's thought patterns.

Karl Marx gave us a guide to the study of bourgeois ideology when he said,

The greater the development of the contradiction between the growing productive forces and the existing social order, the more does the ideology of the master class become imbued with hypocrisy and the more the falseness of this ideology is revealed by life.

The challenge for us is to expose this capitalist class hypocrisy and replace it with a Communist, workingclass body of thought.

The preparation period, as well as the conference itself, should be guided by Lenin's keen observation that:

The only choice is—either bourgeois or socialist ideology. There is no middle course, for mankind has not created a "third" ideology. And, moreover, in a society torn by class antagonisms, there can never be a non-class or an above-class ideology. Hence, to belittle the socialist ideology in any way, to turn aside from it in the slightest degree, means to strengthen bourgeois ideology.

We should examine how "non-class" and "above class" ideas penetrate the workingclass and people's movements. We should study how some on the left and even in our Party's ranks "belittle the socialist ideology and turn aside from it."

Now let me present some of the ideological questions I think we should focus on.

THE CLASS STRUGGLE ■ The central, foremost discussion should be the centrality of the class struggle as the locomotive of his-

tory, as the centerpiece of all human activity.

Our Party needs this especially because of some weaknesses in the world movement—though in the world movement today there is a growing reaction against wrong ideas about the class struggle, and we should look at this ideological correction now taking place in the world movement.

We should try to make our position as clear as we can so there is no ambiguity or equivocation.

We should discuss the Marxist-Leninist concepts as they apply to our situation in the United States. And from this we should draw conclusions, assessments or new ideas, and base them solidly on a Marxist-Leninist framework.

- Has the nature of the class struggle changed? Is it still the mainspring of events and history?

- Has the decrease in the number of basic workers changed the role of the working class?

- Has this role changed due to the growth in the numbers of technical and service workers?

- Is there such a thing as an "underclass?"

- Should we substitute the term "mass production industries" for "basic industries?"

- What is the impact of the fact that the structural crisis has leveled off?

- Does the working class play the same role in countries where the class is relatively small?

RACISM ■ We should discuss the unique, special features of racism in the United States at the present moment.

The conference must take up the many-sided struggle against racism. We must challenge any ideological defense of racism, discuss how racist ideology affects the different sectors of the population: the working class, middle strata, the young generation. We should probe the ideological roots

of racism.

We should formulate the most effective and convincing arguments against racism in today's conditions. In this we should emphasize how racism destroys class unity.

NATIONALISM ■ We should discuss the unique features of nationalism in the United States today.

- How does nationalism affect the struggle against racism?
- How does it affect the different sectors of the nationally oppressed communities?
- How does it affect class unity?

MALE SUPREMACY ■ How does male supremacy affect the struggle for equality?

- How does male supremacy impact on the trade union movement?
- What are the ideological roots of male supremacy?

GREAT POWER CHAUVINISM ■ How does great power chauvinism affect the struggle against U.S. imperialism?

- What are some of the concepts propagated by the ideologues of U.S. imperialism?

Lenin said:

The principle of internationalism and an uncompromising struggle against contamination of the proletariat with bourgeois nationalism, even of the most refined kind, is absolutely essential.

THE SOCIALIST WORLD ■ While we do not want to tip the balance of the conference toward developments in the socialist countries, it is clear we must deal with some of them.

Our guide should be mainly that we deal with those questions relating to the socialist countries which have an effect on our work—such as, the nature of imperialism, the class struggle, the role of the working class, how to deal with issues that cut across class and national boundaries.

- What are the problems related to the

fact that there are no models of socialism?

- What are the problems related to different concepts of property ownership?

We should try put emphasis on questions related to the features of socialism that will mold a unique socialist USA.

We should discuss how to improve our polemics against the most effective bourgeois anti-socialist arguments.

THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES ■ What are the ideological questions related to countries where the socialist path is on "hold?"

- What is the role of nationalism in these struggles?
- What has happened to the "non-capitalist path of development?"

DEFENSE OF MARXISM-LENINISM ■ We should discuss the proposals to revise some of the basic, primary underpinnings of the science of Marxism-Leninism.

There have been challenges to the concept that developments in human society are law-governed and, thus, to the concept that history has a discernible, inevitable and progressive direction.

And of course there are new twists to the old questions about the pivotal role of the working class.

There are questions about the nature of state-to-state relations between capitalist and socialist societies, whether they can operate without in any way being affected by class relations.

FOR A NUCLEAR-FREE WORLD & PEACE ■ How is this ideological arena related to the class struggle and the struggle for national liberation?

THE THEORY OF THE PARTY ■ We should discuss how to deal with the challenges to the absolute necessity for a Communist Party, as they appear today.

We should spell out clearly the unique contributions the Communist Party makes, specifically in the ideological arena.

COMMUNIST IDEOLOGY ■ Workingclass Communist ideology is related to one's consciousness about his or her class relations.

Concretely, we should try to deal with questions like:

- What is the specific nature of the ideological thought patterns created by such schemes as "Quality of Work Life Circles" and "Labor-Management Partnership Teams?"

- What are the ideological questions that emerge in the discussions about the "convergence" of the two economic systems?

- What are the specific features of bourgeois ideology that penetrate the ranks of the working class and the most effective ways to combat them?

- How and why do workers accept and even defend the ideology of the opposing class?

- What are the specific problems in developing class consciousness and fighting the influence of enemy ideology?

- What are the ideological trends related to racism and class unity?

- The opposing class ideologies are in a unique conflict within the ranks of the middle class, professionals, intellectuals and farmers. What is the nature of this clash?

- What are the ideological trends among the hungry and homeless, or generally among those living without hope?

BREAKING NEW GROUND

These are only some of the questions we should consider in preparing the conference.

The idea of a conference on ideological questions is new to all of us. One of the concrete results of the conference should be the drafting of a new Party program or bringing it up to date.

For many in our Party, the discussion on some of these questions will be new. A big section of the party is young and inexperienced in dealing with ideological matters. And some of the older comrades have forgotten how to deal with ideological questions creatively and in depth.

The above remarks are only food for thought. The discussions need not be, in fact should not be, limited to what is presented in this guide.

The aim of the conference should be to become more deeply grounded in our ideology, and more confident, bold and creative in winning the minds and hearts of the working class and people.

Finally, we should keep in mind that the discussion and the conference should result in greater and deeper unity in the Party —both political and ideological unity.

The Fresh Winds in Labor Blow Stronger

GEORGE MEYERS

PRESIDENT GEORGE BUSH HAS BEEN IN OFFICE barely three months. Already, his actions prove that organized labor was correct in opposing his election. Bush may not be a "double" of actor Ronald Reagan, but he is as reactionary as his predecessor. He has packed his Administration with representatives of the biggest corporations, while Vice-President Quayle links the Administration's base to the organizations of the ultra-right.

The President's role in the Eastern Airlines strike, (in its third week at this writing), quickly shattered any illusion that he might moderate the bitterly anti-labor posture of the Reagan-Bush Administration. Frank Lorenzo, owner of Eastern Airlines, was a big contributor to the Bush election campaign. Now he is getting his money back with interest. The President acts as though he were on Lorenzo's payroll—as were highly placed appointees of his new Administration.

Lorenzo acquired Eastern Airlines to milk it dry. He has been selling off Eastern's most valuable assets, or transferring them to Continental Airlines, which he owns, along with Texas Air. In the process, he set out to destroy the unions at Eastern just as he did at Continental.

For well over a year, Lorenzo refused to bargain for a new contract with the International Association of Machinists (IAM). Instead, he arrogantly demanded heavy concessions on a take-it-or-leave-it basis. After many months of fruitless efforts to bargain, the IAM, which represents the 8,500 machinists, mechanics and baggage handlers at Eastern, voted to strike by an overwhelming 97 percent.

In a last ditch effort to achieve a peaceful settlement, the union agreed to the binding arbitration recommended by the Federal Mediation Board. The company refused. The union urged the President to declare a "60 day cooling off period." This would give an emergency panel of the Mediation Board an opportunity to work out a compromise agreement.

The Board's proposal did not fit Lorenzo's union busting schemes. He flatly rejected the proposal and forced a strike. Under the pose of defending "free collective bargaining," President Bush immediately sided with his friend Lorenzo, and rejected the Board's proposal. In the next breath, he declared that if the IAM exercised its legal right to declare a secondary boycott affecting rail transportation, he had a bill already prepared to rush through Congress making the boycott illegal. On thirty-three previous occasions, the Mediation Board has recommended "cooling off" periods. This is the first time any President has ignored their proposals.

Lorenzo and Bush were completely confident that the Eastern strike could be used to destroy District Lodge 100 of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) and reverse the fightback movement developing in all of labor. Big Business was fully behind this scheme. Weeks before the strike began, the *New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal* and other newspapers, were urging Bush to go after the IAM the way Reagan went after the Air Controllers (PATCO). Reagan had barely taken office when he used scabs, including the military, to permanently replace the striking air controllers and completely destroy their union. His action set the stage for an anti-labor binge from which the trade union movement is only now recovering.

But Lorenzo, Bush and company badly miscalculated. They completely underestimated the nationwide labor unity that would develop, and the galvanizing effect the strike would have on the entire trade union movement. Lorenzo had been sure the pilots would cross the IAM picket line. He would then bring in scabs to permanently replace the strikers. Lorenzo proved to be 98 percent wrong. Both the pilots and the flight attendants gave their full support to the strike and have been walking the picket lines in a stirring example of solidarity.

While the IAM was doing everything possible to avoid a strike, it prepared for a struggle. It sought and received full support from AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland and the Executive

George Meyers is chair of the National Labor Commission, Communist Party, USA.

Council. Spirited rallies kept the membership up-to-date on the status of negotiations. The AFL-CIO's Industrial Union Department's dynamic "Jobs With Justice" was put on the alert. A Labor Support Committee was established, led by Steelworkers Union President Lynn Williams. A Citizens' Committee headed by Eleanor Holmes Norton, former Chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, was formed to investigate Lorenzo and to keep the public informed on his anti-labor actions. The Rev. Jesse Jackson, actor Ed Asner and other leading personalities have been travelling the country, mobilizing public support for the strikers. The Eastern strike was quickly combined with a boycott of Lorenzo's Continental Airlines.

This strike has stirred the trade union movement to the very depths of its soul. A spirit of confidence and excitement permeates picket lines, union halls and strike support rallies from one end of the country to the other. Trade union leaders are declaring that this strike has been a shot in the arm for the workers, who want to put an end to attacks on their jobs, wages and benefits.

The strike is having an impact on contract negotiations that will involve over three million workers in 1989. Included are tens of thousands of members in AFSCME, the Communication Workers, Food and Commercial Workers and Steelworkers.

While the outcome of this strike is still to be determined at this writing, it has all the earmarks of an historic watershed struggle. It can mark the strategic turning point when labor goes on the offensive after a prolonged period on the defensive.

THE STRIKE SHOWS IN LIFE THE VALIDITY AND scope of the "fresh winds" in the labor movement. A wave of anger and frustration is sweeping through the grass roots. Rank and file workers are fed up with the drastic decline in their living standards while the corporations wallow in unprecedented profits. This mood is affecting the unorganized as well as the organized. White collar workers are attracted to the trade unions in growing numbers. "Jobs With Justice" campaigns are reaching minimum wage service workers. Many of these workers had formerly worked in such unionized industries as

steel and auto, where half the workforce lost their jobs as a result of plant closings, runaway shops, and the structural crisis in the basic industries.

Corporate America is fully aware of the angry mood their greedy grab for maximum profits has created in the ranks of labor. They are strenuously seeking ways to head it off. For over a decade, they have gone all out to crush unions and block union organization. Now they have come up with what might be described as a "carrot and club" approach. Having mercilessly attacked the unions, Big Business is now approaching certain conservative union officials, declaring "we want to cooperate, not confrontation." But they insist that labor rid itself of leaders who have an "adversarial" attitude in labor-management relations.

The trade union movement should remember the bitter lessons of the late 1940's and the start of the Cold War. The end of World War II was marked by the greatest strike wave in history. Steel, auto, electrical, packing and other industrial unions joined in simultaneous strikes around a common set of demands. The result was a complete victory for labor, which resulted in the elevation of living standards for the entire working class. Labor was on the march!

Then came the blandishments of the big corporations. "This is going to be the 'American Century,'" they declared. "The U.S. came out of the war stronger than ever. There is plenty for all." But then they went on to add, "Just get rid of the 'Red' troublemakers, and labor and management will get along just fine." Billy Greene and George Meany, the AFL's top officers, and Phil Murray and Walter Reuther of the CIO took the bait.

In the midst of a hysterical Red-baiting binge, the Taft-Hartley Act was passed by Congress. Its selling point was a clause outlawing the right of Communists to hold union office. After the fact, the trade unions belatedly made efforts to neutralize this vicious piece of anti-labor legislation. But George Meany, then its Secretary-Treasurer, pulled the AFL out of the struggle, declaring: "Why should we pull the 'Commies' chestnuts out of the fire?"

Some union officials persist in their destructive anti-Communism. In support of the ever illusive "class peace," William Olwell, Executive Vice-President of the Food and Commercial

Workers, had Lewis Anderson fired as director of the union's Packinghouse Division. Anderson had been leading a valiant struggle against Iowa Beef, Hormel, Morrell and other meat packers in their drive to slash wages and destroy safety and health measures. (Meat packing is one of the nation's most dangerous industries.) Olwell charged Anderson with being too "confrontational." Class peace has become the code word of the Bush-corporate anti-labor offensive for splitting labor unity and capitulation.

A progressive trade union leader, Kenneth Blaylock, former head of the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), was recently defeated for re-election by a gang-up of rightwing trade union officials. An estimated \$100,000, from donors outside the AFGE, was spent to defeat Blaylock, according to knowledgeable trade union sources.

Among Blaylock's "crimes" were his vigorous challenge to President Reagan's drive to privatize government jobs, a leadership role in the Rainbow Coalition and in the election campaign of the Rev. Jesse Jackson, and his opposition to Reagan's foreign policies. AFGE drew the wrath of top AFL-CIO officials and the *Washington Post*, for having the temerity to send a fraternal delegation to the Soviet Union.

Labor-management committees have been set up at national, state and city levels with financial assistance from the Reagan and Bush Administrations. Their avowed purpose is to "solve problems through mutual understanding." On the national labor-management committee, along with a number of prominent trade unionists, sit the chief executives of such corporate union-busters as International Paper, which used scabs to permanently replace striking workers at its mill in Jay, Maine.

This corporate ploy has sharpened an internal debate in the AFL-CIO over which direction labor should take. Often below the surface, the debate has been between those advocating accommodation and those who more realistically recognize the need to struggle.

The Eastern-Continental strike has momentarily shoved all this into the background. The entire labor movement from top to bottom is united in a titanic class battle between labor and capital. Labor is going on the offensive. The struggle over direction is being settled in life.

But as Gus Hall, national chairman of the

CPUSA recently put it: "For labor to make a complete shift to an offensive position, it must discard tactics and approaches left over from the past period. It must take the lead from the Eastern workers and scrap defensive tactics and non-struggle concepts."

Comrade Hall listed some examples of defensive tactics. These included wage cuts "to make American products more competitive"; and ESOPS (Employee Stock Ownership Plans), which give the illusion that workers can save their jobs by "becoming their own boss." In reality, experience has proven that ESOPS benefit the owners who dump their outmoded facilities, and bankers who make big profits out of loans to workers, then dominate management, forcing drastic wage cuts and increased work loads. ESOPS are invariably used to head off the demand for public ownership.

SOME CENTER FORCES IN LABOR, WHO HAVE A generally progressive position on social questions, have embraced class partnership schemes such as "Quality of Worklife Circles" in auto, and "labor-management participation teams" in steel. Supposedly designed to give labor on the shop floor a voice in conditions at the workplace, they have proven to be poorly concealed designs to get out more production at the expense of the workers. Workers are invariably wary of such schemes. In most instances, these arrangements have been literally forced down their throats. Factory and mill owners demand agreement on such plans before they will build new facilities or reopen those that have been shut down.

Bitter experience has demonstrated that labor-management schemes have as their major objective the elimination of jobs through speedup and by combining jobs. They attack the very essence of democratic trade unionism, the shop steward system. These appointed labor-management "teams" are not answerable to the union membership. They are a serious source of discord wherever they exist. They have come under heavy attack in the discussions that are leading up to the UAW convention scheduled for June of this year. Local unions in steel have rejected them in some cases, discarded them in others, and ignored them in still others.

Forced overtime is yet another serious obsta-

cle that hinders workers from taking the offensive. Hundreds of thousands of workers have lost their jobs in such basic industries as steel, auto and mining. Many have been forced to take minimum-wage jobs in the service industry. Others remain unemployed, or have been forced into early retirement. Union contracts have been violated. Companies force workers on the job to work six and seven days a week, 10, 12, and 16 hours a day.

A deep-seated revolt has erupted against forced overtime. Exhausted workers see their health deteriorating and their family life disrupted. With big chunks of overtime wages going into taxes, the cry has gone up, "There must be more to life than this. All we do is work, work, work."

Profit sharing is another scam forced on workers in lieu of wage increases. Pensions and vacation pay are adversely affected. Glowing company promises of big bonuses usually prove to be very hollow when the time comes to collect them. A \$2,000 year-end bonus may seem large. But it comes to less than \$1 an hour for workers who have taken wage cuts of \$5 or more per hour. Furthermore, such "bonuses" are not melded into the wage structure as permanent increases in wages, holiday or vacation pay, etc.

THE EASTERN AIRLINES STRIKE HAS GIVEN NEW meaning to the old trade union slogan, "In unity there is strength." Working class unity is a vital ingredient in the program for trade union advance. Big Business is completely aware of this. It spares no effort or expense to create divisions in the ranks of the workers and between the trade unions and their natural allies; discrimination against African Americans, Hispanics, Asian Americans and other racially oppressed—discrimination in hiring, promotion, housing, education—and against women workers. Not the least of the attacks on working class unity is the ideological campaign to inject racist concepts into our society. Some of it is open and blatant. But in most cases, clever attempts are made to hide it.

Affirmative action programs have become key weapons in the fight for working class unity. The trade unions have come a long way on this question. They have been leading opponents of the Reagan and Bush attacks on existing affirma-

tive action programs.

But organized labor cannot be satisfied with only defending what has existed. In moving labor forward, the left must take the lead in imbedding permanent affirmative action policies in the very structure of the trade union movement. Taking a lead from the Steelworkers in the famous Weber case, affirmative action programs with concrete quotas must be incorporated in every national and local contract signed with the companies. This same concept must be applied to the internal structure of the unions, including the right of civil rights committees to file their own grievances.

The trade union struggle in support of affirmative action is the glue that will make the bond between the African American community, the Hispanic and other racially oppressed, solid and lasting.

The Eastern strike has stimulated a noticeable increase in labor's political and legislative activity. Large trade-union delegations have been lobbying Congress on a number of pieces of legislation. Some bills have a direct relationship to the Eastern strike. Labor is vigorously pressing for quick enactment of H.B. 1231 introduced by Congressman James Obestor (D-MN). This bill would require President Bush to order a 60-day cooling-off period at Eastern, and to appoint a committee to arbitrate the differences. It has already passed the House by a big margin and is now awaiting action in the Senate.

Labor is also supporting a House resolution calling for an investigation, by the Secretary of Transportation, of Texas Air and its subsidiary, Eastern Airlines. Its purpose is to prevent any sudden moves affecting domestic or international operations of Eastern or any other Texas Air subsidiary. Senator Howard Metzenbaum (D-OH), has introduced legislation that would prevent Lorenzo from dismantling Eastern while it is in bankruptcy proceedings. It would also make Eastern's parent company, Texas Air, responsible for Eastern's debts.

High on labor's legislative agenda is passage of H.B. 1383, introduced by Congressman Joseph Brennan (D-ME). This would limit the ability of corporations to use scabs to permanently replace striking workers. This vicious unionbusting tactic has escalated since Ronald Reagan destroyed PATCO. H.B. 1383 goes in the right direction but it is woefully inadequate. It limits the use of scabs

as permanent replacements only to the first ten weeks of a strike. In Canada, the period is six months, and in a number of European countries it is totally outlawed. A vigorous campaign by labor and its democratic allies can improve this bill, while gaining enough votes to overcome a probable presidential veto.

THE SPIRIT OF MILITANCY AND SOLIDARITY THAT marks the Eastern strike can have a profound impact on the AFL-CIO's legislative activity. For some years, the trade unions have been in a defensive position on the legislative front. But recent spirited legislative conferences called by the Industrial Union Dept., the UAW, Paperworkers, IAM and others, right in the midst of the Eastern strike, clearly indicate that labor is ready to go on the political offensive. There is no place for "This is the best we can get, so we have to take it," in the name of being "realistic." Or, "We can't win, so let's forget it."

The spirit of the legislative conferences must find expression at the grass roots. Mobilization of Central Labor Council and local union COPE committees and P.A.C.'s can overcome even the most bitter opposition from Big Business and a reactionary anti-labor and racist Supreme Court majority.

Mass political mobilization won passage of social security, the 40-hour week, unemployment insurance, the National Labor Relations Act, and other New Deal reforms despite bitter opposition of Big Business and the courts. Today, organized labor is better organized politically, with COPE organizations and labor PAC's, to move the rank and file rapidly into action.

Passage of the Taft-Hartley Act was a major weapon in the anti-Communist hysteria created by the Cold War. It opened the gates to the long series of anti-labor laws, court decisions and presidential directives that followed. As a consequence, the basic right of workers to organize and strike has been dangerously impaired. Limited, piecemeal legislation is not adequate to this situation. A militant, sustained, mass campaign for enactment of a comprehensive "Labor Bill of Rights" is on the order of the day. Such a Bill of Rights would immediately end all restrictions on the right of workers to organize and strike if and when they deem necessary. It would revive the Norris-LaGuardia Act of 1932, which outlawed

the use of court injunctions to break strikes. It would guarantee automatic union recognition when a majority of workers sign union pledge cards (this has been Canadian law for many years). It would give workers the right to strike when a company stalls on grievances. It would outlaw importing strikebreakers to steal jobs from workers on strike for a better life.

A most serious impediment that holds back a labor offensive is the paranoid anti-Communism of the top leadership of the AFL-CIO. It is virtually the only trade union organization outside apartheid South Africa that denies trade unionists who are members of the Communist Party their democratic rights. The anti-Communist clause in the AFL-CIO constitution and those of its Central Labor Councils are sorry reminders of discredited McCarthyism. The support by the AFL-CIO leadership of the State Department's refusal to recognize the trade unions in the Soviet Union and other Socialist countries, and its interference in unions throughout the world, have made it a universal object of ridicule and resentment. Such actions also interfere with the right of U.S. workers to meet with unionists from abroad. An example of this was the IAM's National Occupational Health and Safety Conference which was prevented from having Soviet unionists from Chernobyl detail how problems there were handled.

It is a matter for concern that AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland has won plaudits from the extremely reactionary, anti-labor and racist, Moonie-owned *Washington Times*, for his anti-Communism. Similarly, the ultra-right Heritage Foundation has urged the Bush Administration to earmark a substantial increase in government funds for the AFL-CIO's International Affairs Department to support its far-flung anti-Communist activities, including its disruptive harassment of progressive unions in the newly developing countries of Central and South America, Asia and Africa. At the very time the internationalization of production has been intensified, the anti-Communism of top AFL-CIO leaders has isolated the U.S. unions from some of their strongest potential allies abroad. It has impaired ability of the U.S. trade union movement to build mutually advantageous ties with trade unions in other countries in a common effort to control the giant U.S. international corporations.

In the interests of international trade union

cooperation, a number of trade unionists are beginning to challenge the red-baiting policies of the top AFL-CIO leadership and its International Affairs Dept. Unions representing a majority of AFL-CIO members have rejected the Department's role in Central America. Trade union leaders are speaking out against its support of the State Department's ban on visas for Soviet trade unionists. Elimination of the anti-Communism that still fouls the atmosphere in the AFL-CIO will eliminate yet another obstacle to labor's forward thrust.

ORGANIZED LABOR'S BROAD SUPPORT OF the Eastern Airlines strike is a clear indication that grass roots pressure is moving the labor movement to the offensive. This will have a profound impact on the entire country. The trade unions are the major mass organizations of the working class. Of necessity, in their own self-interest they must go far beyond the boundaries of narrow trade unionism.

At this moment, labor is playing a key role in the struggle to raise the minimum wage. Even though those workers directly affected are almost completely unorganized, it is in the self-interest of the better paid workers to raise the base of the wage structure. That is why the corporations exert such strenuous efforts to keep the minimum wage as low as possible.

Organized labor has become a key force in the fight for affirmative action. Trade unionists have learned from bitter experience that a divided workforce is a dangerous weapon in the hands of the union-haters.

Trade unionists are playing a leading role in the struggle for peace. Over the years, workers have come to see that the policies of U.S. imperialism are directed to the sole benefit of the U.S. transnational corporations—the same companies who have forced wage cuts and other concessions here at home, in the name of "making the U.S. competitive."

In spite of many twists and turns, labor is

slowly but surely moving with its allies in the direction of political independence. The trade union movement has the key role to play in building an anti-monopoly political formation. As labor moves off the defensive, this process will become more pronounced.

Left forces and progressives now have both the opportunity and a special responsibility to help lead this forward movement of the trade unions to a level that will make it irreversible.

As Hall stressed at the the January meeting of the CPUSA National Committee, the key is building left forms in the trade unions. Firmly rooted in the rank and file, left forms attract center forces moving in their direction (and can lead to initiatives around which it is possible to consolidate left-center unity.)

Left initiatives are essential if the forward thrust generated by the Eastern strike is to maintain its momentum. Otherwise it will stall, and the trade unions will be forced back on the defensive under the hammer blows of the corporations.

It is true today, just as it was true in the 1930's, that a bigger Communist Party rooted in the industrial working class, will make possible a bigger and broader fight back against the multinational corporations. We must find ways to implement our slogan, "Build the Party at the Workplace." Every Party club must find ways to be involved in our overall policy of Industrial Concentration—building the Party among the workers in basic industry. We must reach out to them. As Comrade Hall underscored in his summary remarks, "mass production workers in basic industry give a distinct quality to the entire working class." Workers at the point of production are in daily combat with the giant corporations. It is here that the flames of the class struggle burn most fiercely.

Build the Party among the workers!

Organize left forms in labor!

Left-center unity to advance the trade union movement!

People's Targets for the 101st Congress

MAURICE JACKSON

THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES, THIS year, marks its 200th anniversary. With each year and with each session of Congress, it becomes increasingly important to make that body more responsive to the needs of average working people and their families.

While most Congresspeople return to their home districts on weekends, a great many of them are unknown to their constituents. However, with the accelerated growth of local coalitions around a variety of legislative concerns, many of the lawmakers are finding it absolutely necessary to get the feel of the people before voting on any measure.

This was clearly so in the debate and vote on the Congressional pay raise at the beginning of the 101st Congress. Few would doubt that an absolute majority of the members of Congress wanted that pay raise. But when the American people found out that, in the last few years, Congress has voted itself quite a few increases, and that the proposal was to double each member's \$89,000 a year salary, there was an uproar throughout the land.

With all the talk of how poor the Congresspeople were, their constituents knew better, especially when they saw that the average salary with its benefits was about \$126,000. These benefits include the best health insurance, although 37 million constituents have no coverage and Congress has refused to mandate health coverage for everyone.

The "poor" members get gourmet food in lavishly furnished, subsidized restaurants, although up to one half of all young African-American children go to bed hungry each night. They receive travel allowances and have huge personal committee staffs. They have Olympic-quality gyms to work off the pounds put on at subsidized restaurants and with all this they get no sympathy from the public when they cry poverty. Voters back home should make particular reference to this when their representatives bob

and weave on the minimum wage and child care issues.

Over its 200 year history, Congress has evolved into a mammoth institution. Along with its committees, and other bodies, it is served by nearly 30,000 staffers. There are also an estimated 30,000 lobbyists, most of them from corporate America, who seek to woo members' votes with honoraria and perks, and place Lear jets and the like at their disposal.

During each session of Congress there are more than 11,000 bills introduced with a sum total of 60 million words. In 1985-6, while there were over 11,000 bills introduced, only 1,913 were passed.

In the last election more than \$457 million in campaign funds was raised and spent primarily by incumbents, who, through the power of the purse, return to Congress at a 98 percent rate. To some it would seem that all this would be enough to scare away the public from any kind of effort to influence its representatives. But quite the opposite is true. Perhaps more than at any time in the history of the Congress, labor, the grass roots movements and large coalitions are working together to demand that the Congress be responsible to the people who put them there. As the old saying goes, they are insisting that the partners "dance with the ones that brung you."

The massive mobilization of people-power to reject the Reagan nomination of Robert Bork to the Supreme Court, as well as the successful battle to force Congress to override Reagan's veto of the landmark Civil Rights Restoration Act, gave a large section of the public renewed confidence in its ability to achieve social progress through legislative means.

Indeed, there were gains in the last Congress, the 100th for example: the plant closing notification bill, although weaker than the one sought by labor in the House, and the bill introduced by Rep. Ronald V. Dellums (D-CA) to impose mandatory and comprehensive sanctions on apartheid South Africa, which passed by a handsome margin even though it failed to get Senate approval. The overwhelming vote in fa-

Maurice Jackson is a member of the National Committee of the Communist Party, USA.

vor of the INF Treaty, in the face of massive opposition by die-hard conservatives and lukewarm support by then presidential candidate George Bush, also served as a confidence builder for those who want peace and progress.

There were also some setbacks—most notably the failure to legislate a higher minimum wage and the ABC child care bill. But on balance, when one looks at the achievements, propelled by voter and non-voter alike, in prohibiting more contra aid, ratifying the INF treaty and the like, it becomes clear that more victories lie ahead.

WHILE MANY WERE AND ARE DISAPPOINTED by the outcome of the 1988 presidential election, they can find solace in the fact that the Bush coattails were as short as a rabbit's. For example: when Reagan was inaugurated in 1981, he brought in with him a Republican Senate majority and had 192 Republicans in the House as opposed to 174 now. And given a repeat of the 1986 Senatorial race when broad coalitions returned the Senate to the Democrats, there is a basis for further legislative and political victories. Without the return of the Senate to the Democrats, there would have been no ratification of the INF Treaty, and no override of Reagan's vetos of civil rights legislation.

The 101st Congress has before it major proposals, many of them bills that did not come to light in the last session. Primary among these are the "family issues," which are at the center of the labor, community, women, religious and civil rights coalitions demands.

At its bi-annual meeting in Bal Harbour, Florida, the AFL-CIO issued labor's agenda for Congress, and the gathering had, as one of its main speakers, Senator George Mitchell (D-ME), the new majority leader.

Labor's "Agenda for Congress" has almost forty major demands that run from "Airline Labor Protections" to "Welfare Reform." The first major battle to get this agenda through is on the minimum wage. The bill, the Minimum Wage Restoration Act, S.4, H.R. 2, calls for incremental increases until Jan. 1, 1991 when the minimum wage would reach \$4.65 an hour. The House just passed a compromise that would set the minimum wage at \$4.55 an hour by 1991. However, the Bush Administration, along with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and Secretary of Labor Elizabeth Dole, have vowed to defeat the mea-

sure with Bush promising a veto.

The case need not be argued here for the minimum wage, since the labor and progressive community knows that even this increase would barely get a family above the poverty level. A coalition of organizations working together as "Citizens for a Just Minimum Wage" is spearheading the effort to pass the bill. Its co-chairs include Arthur Flemming, past chair of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission; Coretta Scott King; John Jacob, president of the National Urban League, and AFL-CIO President, Lane Kirkland.

The biggest campaigns around Congress this year will be on "family issues" legislation. The Executive Council reiterated its support for the Act for Better Child Care (ABC), the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1989, and the Minimum Health Benefits for All Workers Act, as the "family" bills with top priority.

To this end the AFL-CIO Executive Council created a special committee headed by Gerald W. McEntee, president of AFSCME, to develop strategy to ensure the passage of these measures. The committee has as its vice-president Joyce Miller, president of the Coalition of Labor Union Women; and Lenore Miller, president of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Workers Union; Morton Bahr, president of the Communication Workers of America; Jay Mazur, president of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union; Lynn Williams, president of the United Steel Workers of America; William Ryan, president of the United Food and Commercial Workers; John Sweeney, president of the Service Employees International Union and Gene Upshaw, president of the National Football League Players Association.

Briefly put, the ABC Bill, S. 5, H.R. 30, according to its leading advocate, the Children's Defense Fund, "establishes quality affordable child care for America's working parents and children." The CDF goes on to say that, "While President Bush has made a strong commitment to child care, it is the ABC that increases parental choice, improves the safety of care and builds upon community efforts." The bill provides \$2.5 billion annually to begin the effort. A coalition of more than 200 national organizations, led by Marion Wright Edelman, president of the CDF, and AFSCME's McEntee, has been in place since the last Congress to guarantee this bill's passage.. Testimony has already been presented be-

fore Congress on its merits. To counter this, President Bush has proposed a tax credit scheme.

The Family Medical Leave Act of 1993, H.R. 770, S. 345, "establishes a national leave policy that provides job protection, unpaid time off for workers to meet parental responsibility and to deal with serious health conditions for themselves and their families." Its key provision is to give employees of firms with 50 people or more (35, 3 years after the bill is enacted) up to 10 weeks of unpaid leave over a 24-month period upon the birth or adoption of a child, or the serious illness of a child or parent. Some of its other features are the maintenance of health care and other benefits and job security, while on leave.

Of paramount importance to labor and working America is the need for medical insurance. The simple fact is that 37 million people in the USA have no health insurance. Millions of others have inadequate coverage, and yet more millions lose coverage when they change jobs or become unemployed.

A bill introduced by Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA) and Rep. Henry Waxman (D-CA) seeks to address this catastrophic dilemma. It legislates that employers buy health insurance for any employee who works for 17 and one-half hours a week.

In the effort to get health care for all, it has been the state legislative bodies that have been in the forefront. For example: In Massachusetts, starting in 1990, unemployed persons will be able to buy insurance from a government subsidized pool that will be funded by an employer tax of a modest \$6.80 a year per employee. Other states such as Washington, North Carolina and Oregon are developing plans to aid the uninsured. Needless to say these are all stopgap measures. Most fall far short of the measures introduced at every session of Congress by Rep. Ronald Dellums of California to create a national system to guarantee health care for all.

A coalition of organizations has been formed to guarantee passage of the Kennedy Bill as a short term goal. According to the AFL-CIO News, "the long term goal is the type of comprehensive universal health insurance that countries throughout the world have had for years, but the United States lacks." The organization, the National Health Care Campaign, has issued a study entitled "Paying More, Getting Less," which serves as an information-rich piece of literature to

outline the case for immediate solutions for the health care dilemma.

OTHER LABOR RELATED MEASURES ARE TO BE debated in the halls of Congress in the coming period. Among them is the Hatch Act reform, introduced by Rep. William "Bill" Clay (D-MO). The bill passed in the House last year but did not get out of the Senate. With some restrictions, the bill grants public employees the same rights as those in the private sector to engage in political activity.

Just recently, the United Paperworkers International Union held its legislative convention, in part with the Industrial Union Department of the AFL-CIO. Among the paperworkers' key goals was the passage of the resolution, H.R. introduced by Rep. Joseph Brennan (D-ME). Affirming workers' right to strike, it ". . . would prohibit the hiring of permanent replacements during the first 10 weeks of a strike." Although it does not protect workers in longer strikes, it is a first measure of defense against the wave of massive assaults on workers' that marked the Reagan/Bush Administration and threatens to continue under Bush/Quayle.

One legislative setback in the last Congress was the failure to pass the High Risk Occupational Disease Notification Act. That bill is again being introduced. It calls for the federal government to identify groups of workers who are, or have been, exposed to dangerous chemicals, such as asbestos and other disease-causing agents. Additionally, there is a bill being introduced that calls for the much needed overhaul of OSHA.

Another one of the major bills labor is working on is H.R. 2216. This has been introduced by Rep. Gus Hawkins (D-CA) and Austin Murphy (D-PA). It has been offered in order to stop the attacks on the Davis-Bacon labor laws by Senator Orin Hatch (R-UT) and other anti-labor congresspeople. In the last Congress, Hatch introduced several measures seeking to exempt defense contractors and others from Davis-Bacon. Hawkins' bill seeks to modernize Davis-Bacon, originally passed in 1931 as the nation's first fair-wage standard law. Its purpose was to bar the federal government from undermining labor standards set by local areas and to guarantee that prevailing wage rates would be paid on all federal construction.

Lastly, another of the bills labor is working on is another that failed passage in the last session. Its aim is to prevent "double breasting," a practice used by construction firms to avoid collective bargaining agreements by setting up non-union companies as subcontractors to avoid payment of union-scale wages on certain jobs.

REINFORCING THE PRESSURE FROM LABOR AND many other organizations on family issues, national women's organizations have come together in a coalition to put these items on the "front burner." Under the umbrella of the Council of Presidents, leaders of 49 women's organizations have joined forces to ensure that action on six major areas of concern be dealt with by the Congress and the Administration. These six issues are: family and medical leave, child care, health care (including long term care), pay equity, reproductive rights, and fairness in tax policy and deficit reduction. Many of these issues coincide with the agenda presented recently by the Democratic leadership in the Senate.

These groups have joined with the coalitions of labor/community groups around child care legislation and they have pursued advanced ideas related to family leave. For example:

- The leaders of the Women's Legal Defense Fund have stated that they would not accept a bill that gives the right to family and medical leave to women only, exempting men.

- The Pay Equity Bill H.R. 41 and S. 16, entitled "Pay Equity Technical Assistance Act," would help employers who are trying to end pay inequities for their workers. It mandates the Dept. of Labor to assist employers who try to comply with the law.

- Additionally, the Equal Rights Amendment has been reintroduced and sponsored by a bi-partisan group of 137 House members at the last count. Its Senate companion is being introduced by Senator Edward Kennedy. No doubt this will be a major concern of the AFL-CIO committee headed by McEntee of AFSCME and the Council of Presidents representing the 49 major women's groups.

The bills introduced are not just women's issues. They relate to the whole fabric of family and society and must be fought for by the entire community. The task, too, must include changing the gender composition of the national legis-

lature. In the 101st Congress there are only 28 women; 26 in the House and 2 in the Senate. Only Maryland, with 3 female of 8 House members and one woman Senator, comes close to having women properly represented.

ON THE HOMELESS FRONT, THE NATIONAL Coalition of the Homeless has effectively lobbied and monitored Congress and has pushed for several bills. The most important of these is the Permanent Housing for the Homeless Act, H.R. 140. This bill, introduced by Bruce Vento (D-MN) and Patricia Saiki (R-HI) calls for \$2 billion to be allocated in both 1989 and 1990, to create 140,000 units of permanent housing each year.

In addition Rep. Vento introduced legislation to extend the provision of the McKinney Act that passed the Congress last year. This bill would guarantee that \$633 million be allocated for emergency homeless measures such as soup kitchens, health clinics, mental health, job training and the like. And finally, Rep. Barney Frank (D-MA) has introduced H.R. 973 which would provide \$50 billion over the next 5 years in grants to local governments and private non-profit groups for the construction of new low income housing.

Housing and the homeless have been among the major items at national meetings of the National Governors Association, the National League of Cities, and the United States Conference of Mayors, all of whom have recently met in the capital.

The National Coalition for the Homeless, in conjunction with the National Governors Association and the American Booksellers Association, recently held simultaneous press conferences in 24 state capitols with their governors, and in Washington, to announce plans for state legislative action on the homeless crisis.

At separate meetings on the same day, in the District of Columbia, Governor Rudy Perpich of Minnesota and Jonathan Kozol, noted Harvard professor and author of the recent study on New York City's homeless, *Rachel and Her Children*, spoke of the need for federal action to deal with the crisis. At each meeting, the National Coalition for the Homeless issued its model draft legislation "The State Homeless Persons Survival Act," and called for the governors to take immediate action. The goal of the legislation, accord-

ing to Maria Foscarinis, legal counsel to the Homeless Coalition, is to encourage the states to "shift from warehousing the homeless to housing." The model act calls for the "creation of permanent low-income housing, preventive measures and emergency relief." These governors, along with elected officials at the local and state levels, have all come to Washington to lobby for funds and needed initiative to effectively solve the homeless crisis. They came to lobby because they themselves have been lobbied by their constituents back home.

Great attention will be given to the nomination of individuals to the federal judgeships, that require Senate approval. Those with poor records on minorities and women will be closely scrutinized. The three most liberal judges on the Supreme Court, Justices Brennan, Blackmun and Marshall, are all over 80 and no doubt the Bush Administration has plans for their replacement in case of death or retirement. This, too, is being monitored by civil rights, labor and women's coalitions. After the Bork and Tower rejections, few doubt that candidates for any appointment will be carefully and closely watched.

Several other broad-based coalitions have mushroomed on a variety of issues that are to come before Congress. One of the major ones is the Financial Democracy Campaign based in Washington, DC and Durham, NC. This coalition of more than 100 organizations includes the major civil rights organizations, labor, church and neighborhood groups, local business associations and housing developers. It expresses the growing anger at President Bush's bank-bailout plan. The Campaign also wants to guarantee a halt to "redlining"—bank refusal of homeownership loans to African-American and other minorities.

One of the coalition's leaders is Rev. Jesse Jackson, who stated at a press conference of the group that, "This crisis was caused by greed not need."

The centerpiece of the Campaign's proposals "is to establish a National Housing Finance Administration, financed by the entire financial service industry, that would provide below-market rate credit to first-time homebuyers and developers of low and moderate income housing." Such a plan has recently been introduced in Michigan.

The coalition's efforts are ever more impor-

tant in the wake of the Bush Administration's proposals to force the working public to pay for greedy adventures of the banks and savings and loan associations. Indeed, Rev. Jackson and Rep. Henry Gonzalez, chair of the House Banking Committee, who also addressed the recent conference, pointed out that, although the original purpose of the S&L industry was to assist low and moderate income people to buy homes at low interest rates, it was aborted by corporate greed and mismanagement.

Said Elena Hanggi, a national leader of the civic group ACORN (Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now): "We aim to channel the anger (over the Congressional pay raise fiasco) out there so every member of Congress hears from us."

A MAJOR EFFORT WILL BE TO DEMOCRATIZE federal election laws, so as to make it easier and fairer to register to vote. The most far-reaching and comprehensive of these measures, H.R. 13, has been introduced by Rep. John Conyers, Jr. (D-MI). It would allow voters to register at the same time they vote. It also mandates that all states institute voter registration by mail, and at all public agencies, such as unemployment and welfare offices, departments of motor vehicles and post offices. Another less comprehensive bill was introduced by Rep. Swift (D-OH) which would allow people to register at the same time as they apply for driver's licenses.

Testifying before the House Committee on Administration, Rev. Jesse Jackson urged passage of the Conyers Bill. He noted that in many states the voter registration rolls are closed 30 days before election day, although usually interest in elections does not intensify until 30 days before the elections. He gave the example of Chicago mayoralty elections where the race becomes especially heated as the election date draws near, and the unregistered cannot be enrolled.

In the Senate, Alan Cranston (D-CA), who, in the last Congress sponsored a companion to the Conyers Bill, introduced legislation that would allow the states to decide how to improve voter registration measures. In effect, such a law encourages states, as many are doing, to revise old laws that turn away many from voting. The Cranston measure mandates the Justice Department to review state laws. Most people know that that institution under Reagan/Bush, could

more correctly be called the "Department of Injustice."

Rep. Conyers has also re-introduced H.R. 1582, his bill to lower the number of signatures required by independent party parties to gain ballot access.

In this session, the "Hate Crime Status" Bill has again been re-introduced. While it only monitors hate crimes, its supporters are hopeful that other stronger measures will be introduced.

WHILE THERE HAVE, AS YET, BEEN TOO FEW initiatives in the foreign policy agenda of Congress, the issue of sanctions against South Africa is back before it. Although in the 100th Congress, the House of Representatives passed the sanctions bill, its companion failed in the Senate. This year Rep. Dellums has again introduced a new comprehensive sanctions and divestment bill. This measure, H.R. 21, is basically the same as the eleven that the House passed in 1988. It has 89 co-sponsors in the House, but clearly the major battle will be in the Senate where its chief backers are Senators Kennedy and Cranston and Majority Leader Mitchell. At present the Washington Office on Africa and other organizations in coalition with it, are developing strategy for what is expected to be an uphill battle in the Senate to pass a sanctions bill.

Because of the negotiated settlement in Namibia, and the continuing proof of rampant slaughter of people in Angola by the U.S. sponsored UNITA led by Jonas Savimbi, added pressure will be applied on the Senate to pass the sanctions bill.

The epochal United Nations address of USSR President Mikhail Gorbachev continues to have a deep and lasting effect upon all of humanity. Gorbachev's far-reaching proposals, and his country's desire to lessen the danger of nuclear war, even taking unilateral disarmament measures, represent a new and enlightening step on the road to peace. In describing Gorbachev's message, the Rev. Jesse Jackson referred to it as "an impulse for creating a new world order based upon the principle of mutual survival." He went on to say that "People with different world views can and must learn to co-exist with each other. This is the only possible path to progress."

Also referring to the Soviet proposals, John Jacob, president of the National Urban League, in his introduction to the League's "The State of

Black America 1989," wrote, "And Secretary General Gorbachev's peace offensive that included an offer to unilaterally cut Soviet troop and tank strength, gave rise to hopes that winding down the Cold War would release resources and energies to crank up the dormant war on poverty in the United States."

Such reasoned responses from two of the prominent voices for progress in the United States, show clearly that the Soviet peace offensive can and should be matched with equal words and deeds by the United States. Yet few voices in the Congress have proposed far reaching measures to match the Soviet proposals.

THE CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS, HEADED by Rep. Ron Dellums, now numbers twenty-four. Its soon-to-be-released Budget is expected to offer some initiatives on the peace front. The budget calls for cutting military spending by eliminating a number of defense systems and for directing the dollars so saved to social programs.

There are to be several measures which are to be introduced in the Congress, that peace forces led by SANE/Freeze are expected to push for. Among them will be a bill introduced by Senator Brock Adams (D-WA) and Rep. Norman Dick (D-WA) that calls for clean-up of Department of Energy nuclear weapons facilities, and to set up a superfund to finance it.

Another measure, expected to be introduced by Senator Kennedy, would put a moratorium on US-USSR production of plutonium. Another bill would stop production of plutonium, already in abundant supply. A fourth measure will call for stopping the production of tritium at the Savannah River Project in South Carolina.

On April 7th, during his trip to England, Gorbachev announced that the USSR, unilaterally, would immediately close two plutonium plants and would cease uranium production in 1989. That's a step that the peace forces must challenge the Congress and the President to match.

The Outer Space Protection Act, which bans the production of weapons in space is expected to be reintroduced in the 101st Congress. Its key sponsors are Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA), Senator Mark Hatfield (R-OR) and Rep. Les AuCoin (D-OR), along with a number of co-sponsors.

House Resolution 53 (a non-binding mea-

sure), introduced by Rep. Robert Kastenmeir (D-WI) on January 3rd, "calls for a verifiable comprehensive treaty banning the testing, production, deployment and use of all space based weapons for use against space, air, or ground targets." According to the Institute for Security and Cooperation in Outer Space newsletter, *Spaceline*, the bill would ban the use of land-, sea- and air-based weapons against satellites and would dismantle existing weapons systems.

Lastly, Rep. Ted Weiss (D-NY) has introduced a bill for economic conversion. It had 59 co-sponsors in the last Congress, and it would mandate civilian alternatives to military spending and limit the economic dislocation resulting from cancellation of military contracts or base closings. In introducing the bill, Weiss stated that "economic conversion has become a virtual necessity" as the country moves into an era of good relations with the Soviet Union and move towards zero or negative growth in defense budgets.

All of these measures, though falling short of Gorbachev's call for deep cuts in military budgets and standing armies, do provide the growing peace forces with measures to rally around. It will be important for the peace forces themselves to call for Gorbachev-like peace measures.

LEGISLATION HAS AGAIN BEEN INTRODUCED TO make the District of Columbia the nation's 51st state. Its population is greater than that of seven states and 80 percent of it is in favor of statehood. The time has indeed come to give the people of DC equal voting representation. Although they pay the third highest taxes in the nation, they are the victims of "taxation without representation that indeed is tyranny."

In the last Congress, Rep. Walter Fauntroy, the District's non-voting delegate to Congress, stated that his bill calling for statehood had nearly 200 supporters. However, because of the constant attacks by congressional conservatives on home rule, there is expected to be a protracted struggle in both Houses.

Because the Council of the District of Columbia has been compelled to enact progressive legislation, including strong rent control measures, the feeling is that if the District won statehood, it would elect African-American, possibly Democratic, senators and representatives. Reactionary voices from the White House and Capitol Hill,

naturally will be heard in opposition. Support for statehood is, therefore, needed and every state and city legislative body should be called upon to back the measure that would give the 650,000 residents of the nation's capital the same political and voting rights as other people in the land.

Fighting for people-serving measures on the legislative front is the order of the day. It will intensify as 1990 census approaches and major redistricting takes place. This redistricting is being closely watched by Rep. Mervyn Dymally (D-CA), chairman of the Census and Population Subcommittee and former chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus.

The thrust of the Republican Party under Lee Atwater, chairman of its National Committee, is to try to unify its own supporters, conceding the African-American workingclass voters to the Democratic and independent forces, even as it pursues the so-called Black middle class. However, Blacks, as shown by the recent upsurge at Howard University, will not be Atwatered, Quayled or Bushed. The so-called Black middle class are those who have benefitted from affirmative action, civil rights laws and the like, and they likewise provide a base of financial, political and moral support for Rev. Jesse Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition concept.

THE IMPORTANCE OF LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES relates to the ever increasing movement toward coalition building around one issue or a set of issues. But these efforts do not always center in the nation's capitol. The grass roots efforts must be in congressional and state legislative districts. In order to be a player on the scene these days, we must know our legislatures, our legislators and we must know legislation. The labor movement has been in the lead in this effort. And its tactics seem to be evolving. Although in the old days, many of the union legislative conferences were dominated by the old boys and business agents, today they are being better attended by the minorities and women, as well as militant white unionists. The work to insure proper legislation must have its proper main base back home. This is where the voters put their representatives in office and where they can take them out.

In the District of Columbia, every major firm and corporation has a lavishly funded legislative apparatus. They have advanced computers that

trace every bill, its history and cost, and its opponents and supporters. They also have 30,000 lobbyists with fat wallets and perks to flaunt before the lawmakers. However, with the uproar generated by the recent pay-raise proposals, increasing numbers of Congresspeople are refusing any form of honorarium (at least those they have to report).

But the people's power is expressed by increasing pressure back home on their legislators. It is expressed by the need for more progressive, grassroots forces in the labor and other movements to be included in their organizations' legislative conferences that are held in the national and the state capitals. This where the lobbying is and where there is the need for assistance.

To be effective on the legislative front at the national level and, especially, at the local level, means, above all, to have the ability to keep abreast of the issues at hand.

Most major unions and civic organizations have legislative offices in Washington. Here they rate the members of Congress on the basis of is-

ues that affect their members. The AFL-CIO, the UAW, the CWA, the NEA and most other unions annually release their scorecards. Other organizations like the National Council of Senior Citizens, SANE/Freeze, the United States Student Association and the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights do the same. These ratings, as well as copies of pending legislation, can be obtained at the affiliates back home and at congressional district offices.

To be effective means to be knowledgeable and it means to be active. And if indeed, the forces for social and political progress use these mechanisms, they can make Congress fair and responsive; they can force those elected to be responsive—or they can be elected themselves. There should be no doubt that the Congress, the state legislatures and the city councils would be better institutions if they were occupied by workers, by women and by minorities. The time for legislative action, political independence and for "street-heat" is now. □

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The Negotiations in Steel-Workers Battle the Restructured Industry

MIKE BAYER

NEGOTIATIONS, THIS SPRING, BETWEEN THE United Steelworkers of America and four companies—Inland, Bethlehem, National and ARMCO—mark the beginning of a new stage in the struggle between Big Business and basic industrial workers in the United States. This stage has been ushered in by the virtual completion of the restructuring process that the steel (and most manufacturing) companies began in the late '70s.

This restructuring, Big Business's response to the crisis world capitalism found itself in, accomplished its main purpose: the increase of profits through a combination of shutdowns, job cuts and modernization to the point that steel mills are once again as valuable sources of profit as other areas of capital investment.

This restructuring was accompanied by social and political changes—identified with Reaganism—that justified the abandonment of all social and economic priorities except increasing profits. Labor was targeted as the main obstacle to American industries' "competitiveness." The "scorched earth" policy of the companies, the attacks on workers and their unions, the gutting of the economic base of whole communities, the intervention of the federal government on the side of big capital against working people, and the scapegoating of foreign workers created an environment in which workers were put on the defensive. As a result, the steel companies were able to force workers to finance most of the cost of the restructuring through concessions on wages and jobs.

Now, with the mills once again churning out record profits (over \$2 billion last year), the companies want more of the same. Steelworkers are being asked to make a choice: They can either accept the companies' arguments, that workers must first increase the corporation's profits, whatever the cost in jobs, safety or quality of life, or,

they can set as their main goal improving the standard of living for their families and themselves, increasing the safety factors at work, and improving job security.

During the past years the companies, and many within the union, have argued for "realism," that is, to grant concessions in order to keep the mills open. Steelworkers did that in 1983 and 1986 and half of them lost their jobs. Many workers today are forced to work 10 or more hours of overtime to take home the same week's total wage as six years ago. These conditions fattened the industry's profits to over \$2 billion in profits for steel companies in 1988.

WHY THE INDUSTRY RESTRUCTURED

Restructuring the American steel industry had less to do with technological change, although that was part of the process, than with changing political and economic realities on the world stage since the days when the U.S. was "king of the hill." The dominant position that the U.S. steel companies found themselves in after World War II allowed them to run the industry pretty much as they liked. They charged as much as the market would bear and raked in big bucks as a result. Following World War II, the rest of the world rebuilt its steel with the newest technologies. The American companies only expanded when they were forced to, and then used the cheapest, not newest, technology available.

By the mid fifties, the new mills in Japan and Western Europe, having poured the steel needed to rebuild their countries' industry and infrastructure, entered the world market. Within a relatively short period of time they could profitably cut prices and displace U.S. in international markets. They were able to charge lower prices because their production costs were lower (cheaper labor and new technology) and, to capture new markets, they could opt for reduced profit margins.

The door to the domestic American steel market was opened wide by the steel companies

Mike Bayer is a member of the National Committee, of the Communist Party, USA.

themselves. They forced a series of strikes and last hour negotiations on the United Steelworkers of America. Steel buyers, to hedge against short supply, turned to overseas sources for their metal. By the late '60s, foreign producers were supplying a significant share of our market.

Foreign steelmakers also had friends in America who were interested in seeing Japanese and West European steel sold here. These were the banks that had loaned the money for building the overseas mills. These same banks are heavily involved in the U.S. steel industry. They are major stockholders in most of the companies. They provide lines of credit for them. Often their control over the steel industry's purse strings enabled them to call the shots to "protect" their investments.

But, when Japan, West Germany, France and later Brazil and Argentina were looking to finance the construction of their own mills these banks had no problem lending money to "build up the competition." In fact, as the rate of profit in the steel industry began to slip, primarily because the companies had refused to invest in the new technologies, the banks' overseas loans were paying interest rates higher than the dividends from steel stocks. However, these loans had to be repaid in dollars.

The only way the foreign companies could get the money to pay off their loans, and the only way the American banks could get their profits, was to sell steel in the United States. As this process accelerated throughout the '60s, with U.S. banks financing the "opposition," U.S. steel companies refusing to invest in new technologies, and foreign steel consumers increasing reliance on their own suppliers, the U.S. steel companies lost their monopoly control of the market. They were forced into price competition with more cost-efficient producers who were willing to settle for less profit in order to increase market shares. The technological gap between American- and foreign-made steel widened as the quality of foreign steel made it a preferred choice.

At the same time, the banks, which were encouraging the foreign steel producers to sell in the USA, were telling the U.S. companies that unless they increased their rate of profit the banks would not grant substantial loans for modernization. The companies' response was to try to have it both ways. On the one hand, they began to invest in oxygen furnaces and more effi-

cient blast furnaces that enabled them to cut costs, and, thus to compete with foreign producers and with the growing domestic non-union mini-mill sector.

On the other hand, they tried to pay for this investment by shutting down the least profitable, older facilities, thus gaining multi-million dollar tax benefits from the government. New generations of rolling mills and steel-making facilities were installed to produce highly profitable sheet steel while they shut down wheel, rail, wire, bar and merchant mills and the steel-making operations that fed them. This created a void which their foreign and domestic competitors rushed to fill.

They also began contracting out an increasing amount of work, in effect, replacing USWA members with employees of sub-contractors, many of them non-union. This process began with construction craft workers, union maintenance workers and, by the mid-'80s, production workers as well, were being replaced.

The failure to invest in modernization, the shift of investment to non-steel areas, and the cutback in capacity began to catch up with the steel companies. They were losing customers because of the quality of their steel. They had skimmed on research and they were finding themselves incapable of providing the new kinds of steel the market was demanding. Still, the steel companies profits totalled hundreds of millions of dollars a year.

By the 1970s it was obvious that most of the companies, and the banks that financed them, had reached a decision. They were going to milk the existing facilities of every dollar in profit that they could, but they would only invest in those mills and those product lines where the rate of profit was the highest. The rest they would shut-down as they wore out.

They also discovered that they could make hundreds of millions in tax write-offs when they shut facilities down. These write-offs became necessary to shelter the billions in profits they were making as a result of the inflation-fueled boom of the late '70s.

They also began to milk billions of dollars from steel operations in order to underwrite other "more profitable" investments. Oil companies, insurance companies, savings and loans, real estate investments, all began to profit from the billions being created in the steel mills while

steel-producing equipment was allowed to run down and become obsolete.

This period produced an orgy of profit-taking without substantial investment. It condemned the industry to the crisis that enveloped it when the Reagan depression of 1980-81 came along. Restructuring was not forced on the industry by the economics of the international steel market and the development of new technology. It was, rather, the decisions made by the big U.S. steel companies and the big banks that created the crisis.

STRATEGIES FOR PROFIT-MAKING IN STEEL

The goal of restructuring was not to revive the American steel industry. It was to increase the profitability of the mills so that they could compete for capital with other investments. When David Roderick of USX (U.S. Steel) said "We are not in the business of making steel, we are in the business of making money," he wasn't kidding.

The modernization of the mills was never planned to recapture even the U.S. steel market, let alone compete overseas. That would tie up too much capital for too long. But, to modernize the most profitable facilities was going to take a great deal of capital. With the steel corporations in private hands, that capital could only come from their operating profits or the banks. But, those banks, which had made billions in the steel business, refused to invest in new technology unless they could be guaranteed higher rates of return, including larger dividends.

Steel companies are cash cows. They generate tremendous amounts of money. They could have "bitten the bullet," and used their vast revenues to finance this modernization program. They could have cut back the multi-million dollar salaries of their top executives. They could have replaced what everyone agreed was a bloated bureaucracy of managers and assistants to managers and assistants to assistants to managers. They could have stopped shifting money from steel to other investments. They could have, but they didn't.

They had a better idea. *Make the workers pay for the restructuring.* Starting in 1982, the companies sought a series of concessions from steelworkers. Concessions in wages and concessions in work rules. At the same time, they started shutting down plant after plant. If a combined operation of coke-iron-and-steel-making

with rolling mills did not produce a highly profitable product by cutting production costs, it was tossed on the scrap heap. For those plants that could achieve this, the companies were prepared to install new continuous casters, electric furnaces, computer controls and even new technology like ladle refining, continuous cold mills, etc. It is this combination of concessions, shutdowns and new technology that constitutes the restructuring of the steel industry.

Restructuring did not mean rebuilding the steel industry. Corporate spokesmen and industry experts pretty much agree that the industry can supply 80 percent of the market in this country as a result of the cutbacks that have totalled almost 50 million tons of capacity. In fact, they all expect a further cut of some 20 million tons that, while profitable now, won't keep up with the increase in profitability that they are demanding for the future.

Most major companies have gone out of the business of producing rod, wire, bar, rail, structurals, some forms of plate and almost all shapes. Restructuring did not mean thoroughgoing modernization, only modernization of those facilities that were most profitable. Perfectly useful rolling mills, basic oxygen furnaces and blast furnaces have been shut down because the mix of facilities at a particular plant wasn't profitable enough.

Restructuring, from the point of view of the steel corporations, included the USWA contract, concessions on work rules, as much as modernization of facilities. The billions made on the give-back of wages pale in comparison to the tens of billions they have already made on work-rule changes. From 1979 to 1988 the productivity of steelworkers increased 71.5 percent. For every ton of steel workers produced then, they produce 1.71 tons today.

Because wages have stayed pretty much the same, due to the concessions, the companies have saved, on average, about \$26 a ton through productivity increases. That came to over \$2 billion last year. Of course, that is not only from changes in work rules. Part of it is from the elimination of the most inefficient plants, part from the installation of new technology like continuous casters. In 1986 William Trautlein of Bethlehem Steel estimated that these changes would be worth from \$1 to \$2 an hour. That's \$6 to \$12 a ton, from about one quarter to almost one half of the value of productivity improvements to the

companies. Because the companies have made it clear that they are going to invest very little more in new technology in the immediate future, it is clear that any profit increases from productivity gains made in the next five years will have to come primarily from changes in work rules.

The mills are now very profitable. Cutting the number of workers needed to produce steel will increase dividends. But, investing more money in newer technology will only reduce the amount of profit the stockholders can take out of the plants, even if it is in the long term interests of the industry.

The restructuring of the industry's plants and facilities is completed. There is not a steel mill in the United States that is not operating at a profit. The United States steel industry is now the most efficient in the world. According to *The New York Times*, the cost of producing a ton of steel in the United States is \$439 while it is \$447 in South Korea, \$449 in Britain, \$497 in West Germany and \$569 in Japan.

THE THREAT OF FOREIGN COMPETITION

With the menace of further massive plant shutdowns gone for the present, the steel companies need another threat to hold over steelworkers' heads. That lever is, once again, the old bug-a-boo of foreign competition. There has always been more heat than light on this question. From the days of the movie *Where's Joe*, which blamed Japanese and Mexican steelworkers for the first wave of layoffs and shutdowns, to the current campaign for the extension of Voluntary Restraint Agreements (VRAs), steelworkers have been told that the wolf at the door had a different name or skin color and that it was up to them to bar the door.

As analyzed above, the attempt to blame steelworkers for the import crisis ignores the facts about the steel companies' policies which, until recently, made them *the largest consumers of foreign steel*. They found it cheaper to buy slabs from overseas than to run furnaces at home.

Today, the situation is reversed. The dollar's value has been brought down. Foreign steel has become more expensive. The only reason steel is being imported today is that the domestic industry can no longer supply the types or amounts that steel consumers are demanding. The biggest fiction spun around the question of foreign com-

petition is that the wages of workers have been the decisive factor. According to the International Monetary Fund Relative Unit Labor Cost Index, steelworkers in America, compared to foreign steelmakers, are paid a full ten percent less than they were in 1980. West German workers now make almost 25 percent more than U.S. workers. While Japanese steelworkers are paid only about 85 percent of U.S. wages, that gap is much narrower than the 50 percent spread that existed in 1979.

When these facts are put together with the shutting down of older mills, the investment in new technology and the wiping out of thousands of jobs through job combination and speed up it is no wonder that U.S. steel producers now have the lowest costs in the world.

No, it is not steelworkers who are to blame for the foreign steel in the U.S. market. The answer to the import questions lies elsewhere. It lies in the policies of the U.S. steel companies, the U.S. banks and the U.S. government.

This is the background against which the 1989 negotiations take place. The primary levers the companies have used to to lower steelworkers' wages and eliminate their jobs are no longer effective. No one can look at the balance sheets of the steel companies and argue that these corporations are in trouble. This phase of the restructuring is pretty much completed so that there is no present credible threat of more industry-wide shutdowns.

THE 'COMPETITIVENESS' TRAP

The imported steel threat has less impact, with even Big Business newspapers like the *Wall Street Journal* and *The New York Times* pointing out that the threat is not what it once was. It seems a situation tailor-made for steelworkers to start getting back what they have lost. Wage increases to make up for more than six years of working for less. Increases in pensions to make up for almost a decade of slippage and, perhaps most importantly, measures to increase job security in an industry that has taught every worker to fear for his or her job.

Yet the concession threat has not disappeared from the companies' arsenal. They are going into the coming negotiations loaded for bear. They intend to consolidate their gains of the last six years. They expect to reduce the amount of labor used to produce a ton of steel

and to get that labor cheaper. Their goals are simple—tie wages to the ups and downs of production and productivity gains, and eliminate many more jobs. Industry spokesmen project a cutback of as much as 25 percent. Their proposals go by many names (profit sharing, gainsharing, pay-for-knowledge, etc.) but they boil down to one concept: Give the boss complete control of the work force by eliminating all work rules, job classifications, safety procedures and skill differentials that workers and their unions have fought fifty years to establish.

When it comes to wages, they want to eliminate the idea that steelworkers are paid for making steel, that is, for the time they spend working, and replace it with the concept that steelworkers are rewarded only when their work leads to an increase in profits, and punished when they don't.

Another element of this plan is to make sure that steelworkers cannot defend themselves through their union. The lever they are using to push this plan is "competitiveness." They warn, over and over again, that the recent gains of the industry are only temporary: that unless U.S. steelworkers continue to increase their "competitiveness" the industry will once again fall behind and, this time, it will be all over.

As outlined above, there are many things that go into "competitiveness." When the U.S. companies ruled the world market they chose not to compete for sales, and continued to jack up their prices, even when other countries were underselling them, because their monopoly control of the market allowed them to keep prices in the United States up. We saw how, during the '70s they bled the industry for other investments than for the technologies that would have enabled them to compete with foreign steel. Even today, when they are rolling in money, they choose not to compete for a greater market share here in the United States, refusing to increase capacity—even though millions of tons of very expensive steel are coming across our borders to fill voids that the companies created.

"Competitiveness" apparently doesn't mean that the companies compete, it only means that steelworkers compete—not with foreign steelworkers, but with themselves: steelworkers at Inland competing with workers at Bethlehem; steelworkers at Burns Harbor competing with workers at Sparrows Point; steelworkers at the

sheet mills competing with workers at the plate mills.

And what is the basis of competition? Profitability! The companies profit! If worker X can make more money for the company than worker Y, than X gets to keep his job and Y hits the street. If the sheet mill is more profitable than the plate mill, the company will threaten to shut down the plate mill unless the workers there are forced to generate as great or greater profits as the workers in the sheet mill.

THE I/N TEK PATTERN

The same bosses' principle applies to wages. Since the name of the game is profits, wages can only increase when profits go up. But, since profits must always be increased, each year workers have to "earn" their wages by increasing profits: No profit increase, no wage increase, maybe even wage cuts. These ideas are not some nightmare fantasy of corporate moguls. They are already written into a legally binding contract between the United Steelworkers of America and I/N Tek, the joint venture between Inland and Nippon Steel.

This contract eliminates all but five job classes: electrician, mechanic, instrument repairman, operator-repairman and labor. All but "labor" are paid the same. Wage increases are tied to each year's productivity increase, and are not rolled into the following year. Moreover, the I/N Tek agreement gives management total control of the work force. They have the right to assign anybody to work any job, at any time.

A system of testing and steps within each classification decree that if a worker fails even a single step, the job classification is lost. This guarantees a younger work force more able to keep up with ever more intense levels of production. And, oh yes, there is no right to strike. Unresolved contract issues go to binding arbitration, resurrecting the discredited ENA (Experimental Negotiating Agreement, i.e. "no strike" pact) of the 70s.

I/N Tek may be the corporate bigwigs' dream of paradise, but they are realistic. They know that if they tried to impose such a contract on steelworkers today there would be a knock-down drag-out strike that the companies could not possibly win. (The I/N Tek agreement was signed *before* there were any workers hired, *before* the plant was built). Instead, they are proceeding

piecemeal, a step at a time. They are trying to set up gainsharing plans in one mill, operator-repairman classifications in another. They are trying to eliminate "outdated" work rules and technologically "obsolete" job classifications.

In fact, there is little evidence that workers support these kinds of schemes. On the contrary, in almost all instances where the companies, the International union leadership or local officers have developed proposals of this kind, the gut response of the workers has been to oppose them. The struggle over gainsharing at Bethlehem Burns Harbor and the Plant 4 agreement at Inland Steel are only two recent examples of militant mass resistance by workers to attempts to do away with union protections.

In both cases the workers, for months, refused to go along with "cooperation" proposals, until they were finally worn down by the companies' persistence. They often had to fight this battles by themselves, handicapped by the union leadership's (both local and International) agreement with the companies' position.

As the 1989 negotiations start, one of the big problems for the company negotiators is that the level of militancy of the rank and file workers is higher than it has ever been. The demonstrations against forced overtime at Allegheny Ludlum and the strike votes at LTV plants in response to the company's attempt to renege on profit-sharing agreements, all attest to the fact that the workers are ready to fight.

Often these proposals are cloaked in the vernacular of competition and reward—the old "carrot-and-club." The effort is to impress on the workers the idea that these changes are necessary for the company to become competitive and, at the same time, to imply that they will be "painless," that job-loss will only occur through attrition and that workers have something to gain through bonuses bestowed when they themselves figure out how to eliminate jobs.

THE LMPT TRAP

The theme of all these company proposals is "union-management cooperation," usually, although not always, surfacing as "Labor Management Participation Teams (LMPTs)." The basis for these teams is simple. Competitiveness requires a more efficient work force (fewer workers), and this can best be accomplished when management and the workers cooperate in mak-

ing the work force more efficient. In order to sell this plan, the companies put forward arguments that might be particularly attractive to steelworkers, who have seen supervision "screw up the works because they didn't know their rear end from their elbow, and were too arrogant or pig headed to ask those who really know."

When management starts out by admitting its ignorance, workers are willing to listen, because they know it is true. When management says that it wants input, not through some phony suggestion-box program, but by recognizing a worker's right to make decisions on the job, about how the job works, workers are willing to listen, because they know that is right.

When foremen and plant supervisors, who have spent their entire working lives telling steelworkers how much better they are than you, now talk about "respecting your opinion", including- you-in, sharing your parking lots, cafeterias and wash houses, and wanting to work with you instead of against you, workers are willing to listen, because it touches a desire we all have to "get along" with people, even bosses. And, when they say that cooperation between union members and management is good for everybody, and they want now to cooperate, workers are ready to listen because it seems to "make sense." Yet, the cooperation is always for only one purpose, to increase profits by cutting jobs.

But the reality is: There is no cooperation to make jobs safer or more secure. There is no cooperation to increase the standard of living of steelworkers. There is no cooperation in getting bosses off the workers' backs. In fact, a hall-mark of these agreements is more intrusiveness by foremen, who now are steelworkers' "equals" and vote right along with workers as to what is the "best" solution to a problem.

Perhaps the most accurate description of the effect of LMPTs on workers came from Pete Eritano, the former president of the LTV local at Aliquippa, PA. Eritano was one of the earliest and most enthusiastic supporters of LMPTs in the union. He cooperated with every "efficiency" proposal LTV put forward, including contracting-out of craft jobs. And it worked; Aliquippa became much more competitive. From 1981 to 1985 the man-hours per ton of steel fell from 8 per ton to 3.8, the lowest in the chain.

The result for the workers? The shutdown came anyway. It was more profitable to dis-

mantle the most competitive milland so it was done. Employment at Aliquippa fell from 9,700 in 1981 to 700 in 1985. Eritano told *Newsweek*, "We put our best foot forward with management and got it crushed."

WHY BLAME THE WORKERS?

As we have seen, the roots of the crisis lie in decisions made by LTV and the big banks. Why does everybody blame the workers?

Of course, the companies blame the workers. They could hardly blame themselves. After all, if the American people find out that the companies have created this mess they might be tempted to do something about it.

The leaders of the United States government also blame "inefficient" steelworkers for the crisis. These finger-pointers were put in office by the same rich men who control the steel companies and the big banks that profit from this crisis. These government officials, from President Johnson to Reagan, have made the preservation of the profits of the owners their number one task. What is surprising however, is that there are those within the labor movement, and within the United Steelworkers, who have also put the responsibility on the workers to "save the industry." There are those, including some in the International leadership, who give the companies a pass while coming up with scheme after scheme to "protect jobs."

Underlying both the companies' and these labor leaders' approach is the same idea: if workers help to make the industry more competitive, then there will be job security for those still employed. The key to competitiveness is lower labor costs, so that the only way to preserve jobs for steelworkers is to eliminate enough steelworkers' jobs to protect the rest. According to this theory, these jobs are going to be eliminated anyway, but if the union cooperates, then the pain of losing a job can be eased through things like early retirement and at least some of the profits of greater efficiency will go to those workers who still have jobs, through bonus plans like profitsharing and gainsharing.

This philosophy has led to a situation in which the union is in danger of giving up its greatest strength, the unity of its members against the steel companies.

There is no longer joint bargaining with all the major producers. Of course, the companies

wanted that, but instead of fighting for uniform contracts that would protect steelworkers from competing with each other, the USWA developed a strategy of uniform costs, using steelworkers' wages to offset all kinds of other factors. Instead of preventing competition between workers, a game the boss always wins, they tried to prevent competition between employers. They established different wage and benefit levels for workers, forcing them to compete with each other.

Now the situation has deteriorated further. Inland Steel has three contracts covering workers at Local 1010. Different plants within LTV and USX operate under different agreements. There are separate contracts for Joint Venture plants and companies like USX have been allowed to set up plants without the union at all. If the union does not begin to move in the direction of One Industry-One Union-One Contract, the steel companies will be able to escalate their divide-and-conquer tactics, all in the name of cooperation and competitiveness.

1989 - A TURN AROUND YEAR

Negotiations this year between the United Steelworkers of America and Bethlehem, Inland, National and Armco Steel companies can be the turnaround, not only for steelworkers, but all of labor. No contract negotiation proceeds in a vacuum, nor are its effects limited to those bound by the results. While steel contracts in the last two rounds of negotiations have been marked by retreat, they have hardly been routs. Both in '83 and '86 there was tremendous resistance to the concession agreements, both by rank and filers and local union officials.

Since then, the six-month strike at USX, while still essentially defensive, forced Big Steel to back down from its attempt to go the rest of the industry "one better" and get bigger cuts than everyone else. Attempts to put over agreements at Inland and Bethlehem that furthered the "competitiveness" program met with major opposition. This willingness on the part of rank and file steelworkers to stand up to the companies, combined with the fact that the industry is wallowing in profits, mean that a determined union can force major concessions:

- In the first place, a real wage increase. not profit-sharing, not phony stock, not bonuses, but an actual increase in the base wage rate that ap-

plies to holidays, vacations, etc.

- Secondly, the elimination of forced overtime. The USWA estimates that overtime in 1988 displaced thousands of steelworkers who would otherwise have been called back to work. No workers should be forced to spend 28 days a month away from their families. No money is worth that. In fact, 1989 is a good time to start raising the demand to cut the work week like our brothers and sisters in West Germany have done. That would open up even more thousands of jobs.

- Third, steelworker pensions have fallen far behind the cost of living. They need to be increased, both for those who are retired now and for those who will come out in the future. This too will open up thousands of jobs.

- Fourth, too many jobs remain under the control of contractors. Despite the steps made in the last contract there are thousands of jobs being subcontracted and whose substandard pay rates are being used as an excuse to drag steelworkers' wages down.

- Fifth, the companies' and Federal government's successful elimination of the Consent Decree means that these contracts must include affirmative action goals or we are in danger of returning to the same kind of segregated work force that we had to live with (until the Courts intervened) and a situation in which the boss can bring in anyone he likes from outside instead of giving steelworkers the right of promotion to the skilled jobs.

- Sixth, the union will have to use the expiration date and provisions of these contracts to move back to unified bargaining, to end the competition of steelworker against steelworker.

- Last, but by no means least, these contract negotiations offer steelworkers the opportunity to repudiate "cooperation" schemes that can only increase the companies' profits by cutting steelworkers' wages and jobs.

The questions today are: How united will the union be? Will the companies be able to knock the locals off one by one? Will the agreements pay more attention to company profits than to workers wages? Will the leadership

stand with the membership in winning back what has been given up over the last six years or will they argue the companies' case to the membership?. Will 1989 be a further step on the road to I/N-Tek type contracts for everybody or will muscle be put back into the union's ability to defend its members against the bosses?

The answers will be found in the degree to which steelworkers are involved in the negotiating process and the far-sightedness with which the union leadership views the issues involved. A stronger union is needed, not a weaker one. The challenges ahead remain formidable. There will be continued job loss unless a shorter work week heads the agenda.

The steel companies will be able to eliminate seniority in the industry if the competitiveness drive continues. Minority and women workers may disappear from the mills, as will apprenticeship programs and in-plant advancement. And, a union disarmed will hardly be in a position to cope with the growing threat of non-union domestic steel.

The mini-mills have grown from 10 percent to 25 percent of the domestic market in the last fifteen years. By the middle of the nineties, some analysts predict, they will have 40 percent of the market. When combined with the "stand alone" units that the majors are building, like Inland's I/N Tek or USX's Worthington mill, and the emergence of new technologies like direct reduced iron that will eliminate the need for giant integrated steel making complexes, it is not out of the question that half or more of the steel made in the United States will no longer be produced by union labor. This is the challenge that goes to the real stake in the 1989 steel negotiations. It is first a challenge to the steelworkers and their union. Beyond that it is a challenge to the entire U.S. working class, to all workers organized and unorganized whose living conditions, now and beyond, are besieged by the corporate drive for profits. It is a challenge that must be met not by steelworkers alone but to be faced by all forces concerned with peace, equality and democracy. □

Is Industrial Concentration Still Relevant?

GEORGE KRİKORIAN

THE 1980s HAVE WITNESSED PROFOUND changes in the structure of the American economy, and with it, the structure of the workforce. The post-war (WWII) trend of reduction in the proportion of the workforce active in the goods producing sector of the economy—manufacturing, mining and construction, but has continued with greater force, as there has actually been an absolute—not simply proportional—decline in the number of people working in the industrial sector. Simultaneously, there has been a large increase in the number of workers active in the so-called service sector.

This process has given greater prominence to the so-called post-industrial school of thought that posits the inevitable marginalization of the goods-producing sectors as America shifts to an "information economy."¹

In progressive circles, the theory of de-industrialization is most popular.² Unlike the post-industrial school, the de-industrialists do not see the process of the reduction in the relative size of the industrial workforce as the inevitable result of economic progress. Rather, they see it as the outcome of specific investment decisions of capitalists. Consequently, they are also proponents of some form of government "industrial policy" which places a priority on preserving America's industrial base. The de-industrialization hypothesis has led to the popular view—an impact unintended by the authors—that, in the long run, America will have virtually no industry left as profit-seeking capitalists search the world for cheap labor.

These theories have had several different ideological and political effects:

First, they have led to the view that the significance of the working class is being reduced. Politically speaking, this leads to the mistaken notion—seen in the last presidential election—that the "old" class issues are no longer relevant, and that class consciousness is an outmoded concept. In Democratic Party circles this led to the idea that a political appeal to so-called

Reagan Democrats could only be made by moving to the right and muting class issues.

Second, they have led to the idea that the labor movement must now shift away from organizing industrial workers to organizing workers in the service sector. This point of view was evident, for example, in the 1985 report of the AFL-CIO's Committee on the Evolution of Work,³ and has even made its way into the industrial unions themselves, as they shift resources to "white collar" organizing.

Third, they have led to the view that the fight against concessions in the industrial sector is hopeless because the companies will simply leave for low-wage havens in response to a militant fightback.

These theories, consequently, have been utilized as a fig-leaf for class partnership policies, and for what has amounted to a policy of strategic—not tactical—retreat in the industrial sector. On the left they have led to the idea that the importance of industrial workers in the overall political struggle has greatly diminished. Therefore, attention to the struggle of industrial workers and concentration of resources on work among industrial workers should be correspondingly diminished in favor of work in other areas.

This article goes beneath what is immediately observable in the empirical data and concludes that the above arguments lack a firm foundation.

IS AMERICA BEING DE-INDUSTRIALIZED?

The answer to this question depends on what one means by de-industrialization. Are the numbers of workers in industry declining? Yes. Between 1979 and 1987—1979 being a business cycle peak, and 1987 a near peak—the number of workers in the producing sectors of the economy delined by nearly 2 million.⁴ This is the first time in the post-war era in which a secular decline in absolute employment in these sectors has been observed. Indeed, this is the foundation of the de-industrialization and post-industrial arguments.

Has the industrial heartland been decimated by plant closings and destruction of basic indus-

George Krikorian is a frequent contributor to *Political Affairs* on economic subjects.

try? Of course. Is more production now taking place in so-called developing countries for re-import into the United States? Yes. Are imports from Japan, West Germany, South Korea and elsewhere significantly higher than they were a decade ago? Yes. So isn't America being de-industrialized? Aren't industrial workers less important to the economy? Shouldn't the labor movement and the left forget about industrial workers, since more than likely they will not be here for very much longer as we move inexorably to the information economy? The answer to these questions, however, is *no*, as demonstrated by the following.

America is not being de-industrialized. Rather, the industrial sector—along with the entire economy—is being radically restructured. There is a big difference here. For the theory of de-industrialization to be true the significance of industrial production to the overall economy would have to be declining. But, in fact, this has not been happening. Industrial production is as economically important today as it was immediately following World War II. For example, manufacturing's share of the total output of goods and services in the United States has fluctuated between 20 and 25 percent since 1948. Indeed, in 1987 its share was 22 percent of the total value of output compared to 21.6 percent in 1948.⁵

Therefore, while industrial employment has been declining, the value of the output of the industrial sector in the overall economy has remained stable. In a nutshell, this means that, while industrial production has been growing in tandem with the growth of the overall economy, the productivity of industrial workers has been growing *faster*. In fact, manufacturing-worker productivity in the 1980s has risen at its fastest rate in decades; by the official count, it has risen at a 3.4 percent annual rate since 1979. Industrial production today is over 40 percent higher than it was in the late 1970s. Meanwhile, service sector productivity has been nearly stagnant, rising at a 0.4 percent rate annually over the same period.⁶ This explains the simultaneous drop in the number of industrial workers and the rise in service sector employment.

Far from indicating a decline in the importance of industrial workers in the economy, the figures reflect their growing relative importance from the point of view of the proportion of value accounted for by each industrial worker. Once sufficient data is in, it is likely to reveal that the

rate of exploitation—the ratio of surplus value to the value of labor power—of industrial workers grew at its fastest rate in the 1980s, higher than at any time in the post-war era, as real wages were cut and productivity rose rapidly.

ARE THERE INDUSTRIAL WORKERS LEFT TO BE ORGANIZED?

One might, nevertheless, conclude from the above exposition that, "When all is said and done, there are still many fewer industrial workers. No matter how much surplus value they produce, there are still too few of them to worry about, especially when it comes down to looking for new workers to organize. After all, three-fourths of the workforce is in the service sector."

The decline in industrial employment has led people to believe that there is no longer any point to devoting extensive union resources to organizing campaigns among industrial workers. Once again, the facts reveal a different picture under more serious scrutiny. While it is true that the restructuring of American industry has dealt devastating blows to the heavily unionized sections of industry—with some unions losing several hundred thousand members as a direct result of job elimination—non-union industrial employment has actually increased.

In fact, the decline in industrial employment in the unionized sector has been greater than the net loss of industrial jobs. The latest figures available from Current Population Survey indicate that between 1980 and 1984 there was an increase of at least 1.1 million non-union jobs while overall industrial employment declined. This means that unionized jobs declined by a greater number than industrial jobs as a whole.

Between 1980 and 1984, 127,000 union miners lost their jobs, while there was an *increase* of 58,000 *non-union* mine jobs. Over the same period, 513,000 union construction workers lost their jobs, while 467,000 non-union construction jobs were created. Over 1.5 million unionized manufacturing jobs were lost while 617,000 non-union jobs were created. At the time, one study estimated that, of the roughly 18.5 million industrial production workers in the United States in the mid-1980s, 6.5 million were union members, leaving about 12 million unorganized industrial workers.⁷

According to calculations made on unpublished AFL-CIO data, over 50 percent of metal, machine, and electrical workers are unorganized;

69 percent of chemical, oil, rubber, plastics, and glass workers are unorganized; 69 percent of garment and textile workers are unorganized; and 69 percent of food processing workers are unorganized.

The data indicates that there is a large pool of unorganized industrial workers to occupy the resources of the industrial unions. Indeed, far from shifting its sights away from the industrial working class the left should begin agitation and concrete activity for a major push to organize the unorganized in the industrial sector. While some unions are involved in this, the scale needs to be increased. This can only be done, however, when union activists and sympathizers are located in non-union plants. In fact, this is precisely where the left exerted its greatest influence and derived its clout in the years leading to the CIO drives to organize the unorganized. This is where left trade unionists earned their leadership in the labor movement of the time.

WHAT ABOUT THE EXPORT OF JOBS?

The export of capital is a characteristic of imperialism, and, no doubt millions of workers have lost their jobs as a direct result of the export of jobs overseas to low-wage havens. This is particularly the case in labor-intensive sectors and sectors in which relatively low skill is required. But, while the existence of low wages abroad is attractive to capitalists, it is not the sole basis on which investment decisions are made. The conclusion of the de-industrialization hypothesis—that there is a real threat of a wholesale export of our industrial base because of low wages abroad—is unfounded. In fact, there is no danger that the U.S. industrial base will be exported wholesale to Mexico, Taiwan, South Korea, the Philippines, or elsewhere. Certain sections of industry—primarily labor intensive or low skill operations—will continue to move in the absence of a successful struggle to curb capital flight. But overall, the U.S. will maintain a strong, albeit dramatically restructured and different industrial base.

A large volume of steel, autos, textiles, electrical equipment and electronics, chemicals, plastics, airplanes, machinery, and industrial parts and equipment will continue to be made in the U.S. for several basic reasons.

• First, the U.S. workforce is among the most highly skilled and literate in the world. This is the result of its long period of capitalist devel-

opment and shows up clearly in international productivity data, which reveal that, contrary to popular belief, the productivity of U.S. workers is still the highest in the world.

• Second, the U.S. market is the largest in the world. It is still efficient, competitively, to produce where the market is. This is seen clearly in the massive inflow of foreign capital into the industrial sector in recent years, indicating that the "export capital" does not just go in one direction. In fact, foreign direct investment in the U.S. for 1988 (when the figures become available) is expected to just about match the export of capital out of the U.S.

• Third, in dollar terms, U.S. wages are lower than those in Germany and Japan at the present time. Moreover, the ratio of value added to wages in the U.S. is among the highest in the capitalist world.

• Fourth, the technical infrastructure—especially in the form of a large number of scientists and engineers and research facilities—is highly developed in the United States. While R&D as a portion of the overall economy in the U.S. is lower than Japan and Germany, nevertheless, in absolute terms it is greater.

The facts reveal that in recent years, once again despite popular conception, there has actually been a reduction in the rate of growth of the export of capital out of the United States. Moreover, the rate of growth in capital export to the low-wage developing countries in the 1980s has been even slower than the overall trend, at the same time as the vast majority of capital exported for direct investment has gone to Canada and Europe.⁸ The slowdown in the export of capital to the low-wage countries reveals that wages are only one element in capitalist investment decisions.

There are real limits in the degree to which American capitalists can make profitable investments in low-wage developing countries. While these nations are attractive for their low wages they also tend to lack several other prerequisites for capital accumulation: adequate skill levels among the workers (many of whom are the first generation off the land); adequate markets for absorption of output; adequate physical and technical infrastructure to facilitate investment, product development and distribution. The export of capital to these countries is therefore limited by objective factors.

While it has been correct for the labor move-

ment to focus on the problems associated with the export of capital to low-wage countries—and indeed, this has focused attention on U.S. imperialist foreign policy—the extent of the problem has been overblown and, therefore, had the unintended effect of reinforcing the defensive posture of many trade unions.

In fact, only a relatively small portion of the total loss in industrial employment in the U.S. can be attributed to the export of jobs overseas by U.S. capitalists. The major causes of this have been that they can produce domestically much more with many fewer workers, along with the increase in competition from other imperialist centers, and in the context of slow worldwide economic growth. Indeed, the threat of capital export has been used to hasten corporate restructuring, by placing workers on the defensive.

This analysis is not to downplay the impact of capital export on workers in particular industries, or at particular companies, or to undercut the fight to place regulations on capitalist investment decisions. Rather, it is an effort to paint the overall picture clearly in order that workers can get a better sense of their real strength. American workers have been sold the bill of goods that they are expendable because of cheap labor abroad when, in fact, on the whole this is not the case. While some workers face the real threat of seeing their jobs shipped overseas, this is not the case for all industrial workers. Indeed, real reserves of power exist within the industrial working class based on the fact that, when all is said and done, capitalists will continue to produce in the United States whether they like it or not. Only by understanding this, can a militant strategy be developed, returning the industrial unions of this country to an offensive path.

CONCLUSION

America is not being industrialized. Industrial workers—organized and unorganized—and the industrial sector continue to play an important role in the U.S. economy and should, consequently, be given appropriate attention by the workingclass movement. This is particularly true today in the context of the current round of negotiations in the steel and metals, aerospace, transport equipment, textiles, shipbuilding and other industries that are taking place during the latter phase of a long, business-cycle upturn when the dollar is relatively low in value.

Capacity utilization is high in many industries. Shortages of skilled workers are showing up in many highly unionized industries. And overtime and product demand are high in many key sectors. Workers' bargaining leverage in many areas is greater today than at any time this decade. The time is, therefore, propitious for the beginning of a reversal of the decade of defensive battles as industrial workers begin to regain the confidence that comes with the knowledge that they are not expendable, that capitalists cannot make profits without workers. Combined with the anger that has been built up as wages and jobs have been sacrificed on the altar of "competitiveness," a new level of confidence should produce a new readiness for struggle over the course of the next year. □

Notes

1. This theory was first advanced by Daniel Bell in the 1960s. In the 1980s it has become tantamount to a basic truth, as it has made its way into the core of many best-selling books, e.g. John Naisbitt's *Megatrends: New Directions Transforming Our Lives*, 1983, Warner.
2. See Barry Bluestone and Bennett Harrison, *The Deindustrialization of America*, 1984, Basic Books. This book contains excellent information and analysis of the process of capital flight and provides relatively radical proposals for addressing the problem. At the same time, however, the book helped to produce a fatalism that American industry was going down the tubes. The fear of "de-industrialization" has given some trade union leaders the excuse to sit on boards of new groups geared to improving "America's competitiveness"—with the same corporate executives who used the competitiveness threat to embark on a union-busting binge.
3. *The Changing Situation of the Workers and Their Trade Unions*.
4. Calculations are based on Bureau of Labor Statistics data.
5. Larry Mischel, "The Late Great Debate on Deindustrialization," *Challenge*, January-February 1989, 36.
6. Bureau of Labor Statistics.
7. Labor Research Association, "Unionization in Industry," *Economic Notes*, October 1985, 2.
8. Calculations made on Commerce Department data reveal the following: foreign direct investment (FDI) as a portion of U.S. GNP fell from 8.1% in 1980 to 6.1% in 1986; between 1982 and 1987, total FDI grew by 39% compared to growth in total corporate investment in the domestic economy of 6.1%; foreign employment by U.S. manufacturing corporations fell from 4.8 million in 1982 to 4.4 million in 1986, or from 25.5% of total U.S. manufacturing employment to 23.3%; U.S. manufacturing employment in developing countries fell from 1.4 million in 1984 to 1.36 million in 1986; between 1983 and 1987 U.S. manufacturing FDI in the developing countries actually fell in inflation adjusted terms. At the same time, foreign investment in the United States grew by more than 100% between 1982 and 1987, compared to 32% growth for U.S. FDI abroad. Source: various issues of *Survey of Current Business*, U.S. Department of Commerce. □

Communists, Culture and Revolution

VOLODYA TEITELBOIM

LESS THAN A YEAR BEFORE THE FASCIST COUP that was to crush Chilean democracy and speed Pablo Neruda to his grave, the poet, responding to a smear by an *El Mercurio* journalist in December 1972, illuminated the role of socialist ideas, the Great October 1917 Revolution and Communists in Latin American culture. The mercenary hack had reviled Communists as "deficient blockheads," "resentful malcontents" and "befuddled losers." In reply Neruda merely listed the names of some of the better known "deficient blockheads" of our century who called themselves Communists, among them Gorky, Gagarin, Tupolev, Joliot-Curie, Picasso, Matisse, Anatole France, Barbusse, Mayakovsky, Aragon, Eluard, Brecht, Mariátegui, Vallejo, and, of course, outstanding thinkers and politicians, such as Lenin, Dimitrov, Gramsci, Ho Chi Minh and Recabarren, the founder of the Communist Party of Chile. "I humbly presume to count myself among these 'deficient blockheads,'" the world-famous poet concluded proudly. (*World Marxist Review*, No. 11, 1988)

These people are an embodiment of the priceless treasure of the human spirit. They devoted themselves wholeheartedly to the cause of freedom and revolution, and that was what made them criminals to the capitalist system, and giants in the eyes of their contemporaries and succeeding generations.

Thousands of other names could be added to that list. All those people had one quality in common which Gorky defined thus: "Man, a proud word!" Man is to Communists the beginning and the end of their selfless efforts and the measure of all their concerns, so humanism is logically the paramount principle in the Marxist approach to the world and its culture.

Culture is not born outside of time and place. It may die but continue dialectically. It may break with the past but absorb everything

Volodya Teitelboim is a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Chile. This article was first published in *World Marxist Review*, No. 1, 1989.

good that has been created by the preceding generations. We have inherited not only that which hampered creative endeavor and the quest for new depths in humankind and for the mysteries of the universe, but also whatever remains relevant to the development and enrichment of the intellect and emotions.

By its very nature culture is always contemporary. It is a product of an increasingly internationalized humanity, but it should remain loyal to its national roots. Revolutionaries ought not to keep to themselves but rise above groupings and sects and operate as citizens of the world. Communists must not confine themselves to party interests but ought to influence people and nations, not just because communist ideas are the mainstream of contemporary philosophy but also because a revolution cannot be made by the vanguard alone. The world, looking forward to its future, hears not just our voices but also the many voices of friends, of those who believe in humankind, in the people, and in life and peace.

That is what is taking place everywhere, Latin America included. Here is a graphic example: all the Latin American winners of the Nobel Prize for literature—Gabriel Mistral (1889-1957), Miguel Angel Asturias (1899-1974), Pablo Neruda (1904-1973), and Gabriel García Márquez (b. 1928), of whom only Pablo Neruda was Communist—write about social themes; to them, as to Gorky, the significance of literature lies in its service to humankind.

Those who, preparing to celebrate, three years from now, the quincentenary of the "discovery" of America, claim that the arrival of Columbus heralded the birth of Latin American culture, will be making a bad mistake because they are dismissing all the ancient Indian civilizations. More and more people are rejecting the term "discovery" in favor of the "meeting," "clash," or "cross-fertilization" of cultures from the two different hemispheres. After all, the American aborigines were, simultaneously, themselves discovering Europe. The significance of the event,

perhaps, was that the world came to be perceived as something complete. That "discovery" was proof that the Earth is round and that people are the same in the "Old" and the "New" worlds.

Intellectuals used to serve the ruling classes, justifying social injustice in lands that suffered under the colonial yoke for three centuries and then endured the burden of neocolonialism, underdevelopment and illiteracy, a burden carried primarily by the exploited and the dispossessed. But even during the period of colonialization there emerged a different culture and a different type of intellectual who was gradually to forge knowledge into a tool of truth and wield the pen as a mighty sword. Although the process was sometimes imperceptible, it never stopped.

During the struggle against foreign domination in the late 19th century—a struggle ignited by issues of class and national liberation, and not without its racial contradictions—the Cuban José Martí (1853-1895) became the harbinger of a new age for Latin Americans. He represented a blend of politics and culture, ideas and action, freedom and poetry, literature and life, and by his example he anticipated the slogan "*Patria o Muerte!*" Although he died in battle, his self-sacrifice was not in vain, and his name lives on. His heroic death inspired a spirit of revolution. His blood soon nourished the most beautiful flower not just in Cuban, but in all Latin American history. Martí became the progenitor of the Cuban Revolution, which we all consider the greatest political and cultural event in the history of our continent.

There were many such prophets. For instance, Che Guevara, one of the greatest Latin American fighters and thinkers of the 20th century, gazed into the future from unattainable moral summits and paid for it with his life. As he made ready for his odyssey into the Bolivian Andes, convinced that physical death would not belittle his dream and deeds, he wrote: "The man of the 21st century will be our own creation."

POLITICALLY, THE TWENTIETH CENTURY BEGAN IN 1917, rather than in 1900. The Great October Socialist Revolution was an unprecedented spiritual upheaval for millions of workers, students and progressive intellectuals in Latin America. Assessing the impact of that event, the Argentine philosopher José Ingenieros (1877-1925) wrote: "Now all the peoples have embarked on the road

of comprehensive renewal; and we can only guess about its everlasting political, ethical and economic significance." Just a few months after October 1917, the campus in Córdoba, Argentina, became the center of a movement for university reform that swept almost the whole of Latin America. Aníbal Ponce (1898-1938), a 20 year-old Argentine participant in those events and an outstanding Marxist of his time, had this to say about the events in Russia: "The red flames that engulfed the East set fire to our old university as well."

As everyone knows, the Russian revolution, which contributed to the emergence of communist parties and to the worldwide spread of Marxism, was a turning point in the destiny of Latin America. Neruda included in his list of outstanding Communists of the 20th century, cited above, the Peruvian J. C. Mariátegui (1895-1930) and the Chilean L. E. Recabarren (1876-1924). Those two men deserve special attention because they were not only perceptive political thinkers but also organizers of the working class, and the founders of workingclass parties in their own countries.

Mariátegui is rightly considered the first outstanding Marxist in Latin America. Much has changed in his country, in Latin America and in the world as a whole, since the untimely death of that remarkable revolutionary in 1930. His many sociological and journalistic writings should be read as we read any classic, that is, from a contemporary point of view, picking out everything of lasting value but at the same time never taking his views on his own surroundings as the last word on anything. Mariátegui's major accomplishment was that, in the brilliance of the October Revolution, he was the first to attempt a serious analysis of the situation in his own country and in Latin America. That was a feat of creativity. His journal *Amauto* made a lasting imprint on the culture of the continent. His *Siete Ensayos de Interpretación de la Realidad Peruana*, published in 1928, opened up new horizons to the readers, provoked creative thinking and urged collective action. On October 12 of the same year, Mariátegui told the Lima-based newspaper *Variaciones*: "Spanish America, or Latin America, whichever you call it, will never achieve unity under the bourgeois system. It is up to Anglo-Saxon North America to crown and complete capitalist civilization. The future of Latin America is socialism."

Thirty years later, the victorious Cuban Revolution became the greatest triumph of Marxism in the Western hemisphere and changed the course of our history. Its success was ensured by a close link between theory and practice, which continue to enrich each other and find their expression in mass action. Fidel Castro, the outstanding Latin American leader, gives this concept profound expression and inspiration with every word and deed, reaching every heart.

Neruda mentioned, in addition to Mariátegui and the well-known founder of the Communist Party of Chile, L. E. Recabarren (whose life as a political thinker and fighter was not unlike that of the Peruvian leader), Mariátegui's countryman, César Vallejo (1892-1938), a Communist and a poet of great talent. He and his people suffered so terribly under the exploiter system that he was ashamed of his pursuit of poetry and sometimes condemned it. His poetry was a remarkable contribution to world literature. Although his worldview was extremely tragic, the poet inclined toward the great revolutionary movement, which was shaping the course of world history. He refused to accept the victory of chaos and absurdity represented by the inhuman capitalist system, visited the Soviet Union and, shortly before his death, wrote works that were a paean to life, including those about the revolutionary war in Spain.

The seven decades since the October Revolution have seen in Latin America the immense influence, direct and indirect, of *revolutionary culture and Marxist ideology*. The contribution of Communists, representatives of other trends of the progressive revolutionary intelligentsia and non-affiliated people to the spiritual life of the continent makes itself felt among "ordinary" people and among the intellectuals, that is, in literature, the arts, and natural and social sciences. In virtually every country of the subcontinent Communists are making their mark on social, political and cultural life. In fact, every Latin American and Caribbean people, from Mexico to Chile, has produced its own revolutionary artists and people's tribunes. It is our historical and cultural duty to put their legacy within reach not only of the narrow circle of our compatriots but of all the other fraternal nations.

A quarter of a century ago, the Guatemalan writer Luis Cardoza y Aragón (b. 1904) said that "Mexican murals are America's only contribution

to world art." Today, the Latin American novel is considered to have attained that high level as well. Some people see a sort of natural regularity in such peaks of creativity: muralists produced their best creations amidst the roar of the Mexican revolution (1910-1917).

The rise of the Latin American novel in the past few decades has eloquently reflected the spirit that was fostered on the continent by the Cuban Revolution, another witness to the crisis of ideological colonialism and the resurgence of national self-awareness. It inspired painters of inimitable personal talent, such as the Ecuadoran Oswaldo Guayasamín (b. 1919), the Cuban Wifredo Lam (1902-1982) and the Chilean Roberto Matta (b. 1912), to name but three of the towering peaks in the Cordilleras of Latin American painting. The picture is the same in music, theater, cinema, dancing and all the other arts. There was also great progress in architecture, the chosen field of the world-renowned Oscar Niemeyer (b. 1907), creator of Brasilia.

The names of revolutionaries who have made their mark in the culture of our countries would add up to a bulky volume. But an article is not a telephone directory, and we have cited just a few examples to give the reader an idea of the scope of that process.

The Cuban Revolution prompted an awareness of the commonality of the historical destinies of Latin America and the Caribbean countries in every area of life. Havana became the veritable capital of Latin American culture. Moreover, it began to tear down the "Great Wall of China" that culturally separated Hispanic America from Brazil, and also proclaimed the need for mutual contacts between Latin American and Caribbean cultures. What had seemed impossible on the continent under feudalism and capitalism began to be introduced on the initiative of socialism.

MARX STRESSED THE LEADING ROLE of the working class in society. Communist parties should consist primarily of proletarians or, in a broader context, of working people who comprise the conventional and rather inaptly termed category of "manual and intellectual workers." But some fraternal parties occasionally succumbed to anti-intellectual tendencies, to the pernicious and senseless "ouvrierism," [from the French *ouvrier*, worker.—Ed.] which, strange as it may

seem, is often found among some intellectuals and which has caused much harm to the revolutionary movement. That movement is unthinkable without the workers, but it also needs intellectuals. Their contribution to revolution is irreplaceable, as is forcefully exemplified by Marx, Engels and Lenin. We in Latin America do not overlook the role of political thinkers inspired by the ideas of struggle for independence, and of its heralds and leaders, such as Miranda and Bolivar. It does not take exceptional perspicacity correctly to appreciate the role of intellectuals in the Cuban and Nicaraguan revolutions.

Latin American countries have now been inundated with various "foundations," which hold seminars, symposiums and conferences and publish theses, papers, synopses of speeches, etc., presenting historical figures and interpreting events and views as they see fit and rejecting whatever concepts are not to their liking. Sometimes—regrettably, not always—there are progressive motives behind such activities. It is important for us Communists to develop our own cultural and historical awareness, one that would enable us to decide unerringly what is progressive and revolutionary, and what is merely convention and reaction disguised as "renewal." Latin American revolutionaries have achieved a great deal in the field of culture, but there is much more to be done. Our contribution to criticism and theoretical debates in various areas has so far been modest and our ideological discourses are often on the side of sectarianism or liberalism.

If one recognizes that politics is both art and science, one has to study it to prepare oneself for practising it. *The class instinct, intuition or outdated prescriptions are not enough to find one's bearings and act in today's labyrinthine society, or to understand properly the intricate dialectic of life, which, day after day, poses the most difficult questions, leads into the unknown and demands answers to complex problems.* All that takes sound knowledge and collective wisdom, that is the sum of the wisdom of individuals. So let us not look down upon intellect and education nor underestimate culture.

The communist movement has had more than its fair share of protracted tragedies, in which one man thinks for everyone and any unconventional idea is not only treated with suspicion, but even at times proves fatal for its initia-

tor.

Lenin credited Russia's workers and peasants with the leading role in the development of the great revolutionary cause. The idea of an alliance of the working class, the peasantry and the middle strata engaged in manual or intellectual work is the absolute imperative of today's world. No victory on the road of revolution is possible without that alliance, to which Fidel Castro referred when he emphasized the specific need in Latin America for cooperation between Marxists and Christians. That is especially true when incessant attempts are made to isolate communist parties and neutralize their influence on the mass of people, and when the bourgeois press persistently claims that the communist movement is in the grip of a "crisis."

As a component of the revolutionary forces, we Communists are needed today more than ever. The question is can we perform our revolutionary mission, for we will fail if we do not get rid of our outdated ideas. However hurtful and unjust my words may sound, *we may become captives of our own ingrained conservatism, and we must overcome that danger and banish conservatism from our mentality.*

Even the more outdated, arch-conservative, fundamentalist or neofascist regimes have their intellectual hirelings, adept at cosmetic and plastic surgery, who can present outright obscurantism as the latest fashion. Pinochet, for example, has his own court team of "scholars," at whose prompting he holds forth on seven "modernizations." They say that the time of revolution is past. But in fact, far from bowing out of history, it constitutes the real aim of the mass of people.

The process of intellectualization embraces not just the intelligentsia but everybody, especially now in the midst of a scientific and technological revolution, with the world of labor and material production advancing numerous innovations that require high-level training. In this sense one has every right to say that humankind itself is becoming more and more intellectual. The same holds true for the Communist Party. Naturally, the talk is not of a special party of the intelligentsia but of the collective intellect of the party intelligentsia, which are two very different things.

There is a need for change in our political, scientific and technological culture, for the rectification of mistakes, for diverse views, for a will-

ingness to discuss new problems, and for continuous work on questions of ideology and studies in science, literature and the arts. All this necessitates a move toward mass participation in the process of change, so that everyone becomes a subject rather than an object of history. These goals presuppose genuine democracy, the free play of opinions and the lofty responsibility of participation in the collective struggle for a better future.

Concern for the future is gaining ground and taking on concrete forms. The UNESCO-sponsored World Decade for Cultural Development began in 1988, and it is our duty to support that initiative in every way.

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV SAID IN HIS SPEECH on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution that the communist movement needed qualitative change. In our view, it is important to take those words seriously and get down to business as soon as possible, not least because we have already lost much time as it is. To begin with, we should have a clear idea of what to do and where to go. *The movement is in need of renewal if we are not to be consigned to the wasteland of history.* This doesn't mean simply taking a leaf out of somebody else's book. Copies, cliches and photostats, so common in everyday life, are an intolerable absurdity in politics and, what is more, unworthy.

The essence of Mikhail Gorbachev's views, I think, is his call for new thinking, his desire to commit to the museum of antiquity the outdated icons and myths that blinded us for so long, and his willingness to take life as it is, unadorned, in order to improve it and to give a fresh impetus to the revolutionary methodological principles that are relevant to all Communists. He deserves the utmost credit for his ability to consider phenomena without any bias, in the spirit of Marxist dialectics. *So let us follow the example of that honest, heartfelt criticism and self-criticism, put an end to bureaucracy and, yielding to practical demands, break the thrall of empty slogans, meaningless phrases, stereotypical verbiage and high-flown rhetoric, and replace them with the fresh, rich and concrete language of reality.*

It is inadmissible, either in a scholarly study or in a work of art, to violate their inherent laws or tolerate outside administrative meddling. We

have always believed that the party cannot and must not dictate its doctrines, concepts of art, or any official prescriptions in aesthetic matters. The spark of creativity is in the mind and heart of the author, and if that mind and heart are committed to revolution, their product will belong to it too.

Another problem lies within ourselves. Naturally we have many shortcomings in cultural matters, primarily in the practical implementation of cultural policies. Many Communists approach culture in a way very different from Engels. He noted that it is an equal and inalienable entity with politics and the economy. But we often relegate it to a secondary tool. Many observers fear that culture could become a meaningless adornment or even a "fifth wheel."

But culture is not a pair shoes that can be changed at whim. Neither is it the spice in a hot political dish, because it is itself *politics, in the deepest sense of that word.* Occasionally, it may provide the entertainment or spectacle that people want, especially in such forms as the cinema, television or radio.

Sometimes culture is involved in the joyous, dramatic or formal culmination of mass popular festivities or holidays, although that is not its most important function. One must not manipulate culture or use it as a stopgap. It is more than a precious necklace, for it is not an adornment but a means of searching for truth, goodness and beauty. It is a blend of ethics and aesthetics. It is the conscience of the world, embodied in humankind so that we may be capable of transforming, consciously and rationally, the surrounding reality. Its domain is ideology and knowledge. When all is said and done, it is the product of our behavior and everyday endeavor, not just in intellectual matters but in every sphere of spiritual and material life and with regard to all sorts of interests—partisan and universal, private or common.

Communists undoubtedly ought to work better and on a broader front. The party ought to provide for its members not just a home but a fraternal, open and hospitable community bustling with life, because ultimately revolutionaries must live their lives of danger within it. After all, these are people who are under capitalism. They deny themselves many things, swim against the current, risk their lives and are exposed to a host of other perils.

Communists should, of course, improve to the utmost the standards of their work with the mass of people, sharpen their political instincts, and give others credit, where it is due, for intellectual accomplishments. They should appreciate and cherish the talents of thinkers, artists and scientists, who are placing their careers at the service of the people and society. Respect should be paid to the time they put into their work and for their great contribution to the common cause.

That does not mean ideological disarmament or an end to the historic dispute with capitalism. Polemics on principles should be even sharper, more penetrating and better argued because there are still many cultural contradictions. *These, for us, are not abstractions, but part and parcel of life itself and of the struggle for democracy and socialism.* Hence the need to develop the ability to pursue a constructive policy that would make it possible to fight the battle under more auspicious conditions.

I think that the revolutionaries of our continent, living in an atmosphere of unfulfilled hopes, tensions and unresolved problems, should produce a program that would be acceptable to all the progressive sections of society. Progressive intellectuals and students should not just be considered spontaneous rebels or heralds of the "conflict of generations," but ought to be joined in the battle which they, not being in any way "fellow-travellers," by right consider their very own.

The communist and revolutionary movement is living through a very crucial period. The task at hand is to bring our thinking into harmony with the needs of the world on the threshold of the 21st century. Our theory and practice, as well as the economy, politics and culture have to be restructured.

Communists and all the other revolutionary forces are confronting capitalism, which has refined its ability to undertake modernization and which is ready to meet our challenge in any given situation. It shamelessly exploits the achievements of the scientific and technological revolution to further its own interests. That is why it is time for us to return to Marx and Lenin and to apply what they taught to the present situation.

The 20th century has a record not only of impressive achievements and colossal transformations but also one of unprecedented tragedies, including those that involved serious distortions

of the principles, spirit and morality of socialism. The century can be credited with the greatest social movements in history and the triumph of scientific and technological progress (which does not invalidate social revolution). We are about to complete one phase of history and enter another, in which a revolution within a revolution is to be launched.

As for capitalism, it is indulging in claims of a "second youth." It proclaims the "modernization" of the Right, which attacks public property everywhere. It has adorned itself with the prefix "neo," which Nazism and fascism have immediately copied. But no amount of face lifting will resolve the key problems of our time, those which are rooted in the antagonistic contradictions of capitalism.

There can be no true change in society without a change in relations between the classes. Capitalism in Latin American countries is not going to make the slightest effort to "improve" itself if it means rejecting the glaring inequality between the outrageous wealth of some and the abject poverty of others.

There is no "decline" of ideologies, the subject of much discussion recently. In fact, they are all-pervasive. Big Capital continues to assert its ideology at political and state levels, in the economy and social life, in legislation and in the mass media, as it seeks to take control of any and everything that could legalize and perpetuate its dominance. The institutions which churn out ideological precepts are strictly subordinate to the reactionary power centers. We Chileans know that only too well—generals run our universities.

During a recent visit to Chile, I witnessed an impressive rallying of intellectual forces in defense of universities. The brazen fascist dictatorship is out to obliterate those centers of knowledge and research. The polemics between the reactionaries and the advocates of change is heating up. The pressure from neo-conservatives and their ability to disguise themselves demand our attention.

COMMUNISTS MUST THOROUGHLY REAPPRAISE the fraternal parties' achievements over the years and set the tasks for the new millenium. No one can malign our contribution to 20th century world culture, as Neruda demonstrated with his list of illustrious names. Although it has been a

revolutionary, creative and remarkably far-reaching contribution, that should not prevent us from analyzing it self-critically and recognizing the intricate problems that face the communist movement, and the urgent need for change.

The signs of a crisis are increasingly evident in the capitalist world. But it is not going to commit suicide. *We can and must take the offensive because revolution, far from running out of steam, still retains its great potential.* Marxism has translated its theory into practice in many countries and remains the leading current of thought worldwide. It is now gathering momentum as it returns to its timeless origins and wakes up to the dangers implicit in absolute determinism, dogmatism and the mentality of powerless "cogs."

Marxism offers the world ideas that have become a material force, ideas that are simple, rational and indisputable, such as the need to save the world from a nuclear holocaust. The world responds to the instinct of self-preservation, elementary logic, scientific conclusions—in short, the natural laws of life—to such an extent that Mikhail Gorbachev, their most outstanding champion, was in 1987 dubbed "man of the year" in the United States and many West European countries. Of course, the world view he professes is not just his own. He is not simply a dreamer or an armchair philosopher, fantasizing about a world without war. He is the standard-bearer and herald of a great society called socialism and the great idea of eternal and universal peace. It is important to bear in mind not just the moral grandeur of his principles but also their skillful and straightforward presentation, from which many people should learn. As we need air, so we need a *burst of the intellectual energy latent within the people and the revolutionary movement.*

The correlation between the destinies of the world and those of Latin America, between poli-

tics and culture and between universal peace and man's age-old dreams was highlighted in a talk between Mikhail Gorbachev and Gabriel García Márquez on July 15, 1987. Humankind today has to change its thought patterns. The First Commandment of the new Decalogue is to safeguard life and annihilate nuclear weapons. Gorbachev believes that "the whole world needs perestroika." The great Colombian novelist is certain that "if perestroika, if what you are doing is brought to completion, this will be the greatest event in contemporary history." It was not the writer but the politician who remarked: "We need creative imagination very much today." The writer for his part exclaimed adamantly: "Not a step backward! . . . You may be certain that intellectuals in Latin America are on your side. Everything taking place in the Soviet Union is followed with immense interest here."

It was not a Communist but an unaffiliated revolutionary who spoke, and his words convey the mood of our people as well as of most Latin American intellectuals. Gorbachev added: "I am very interested in that continent and its destiny. It is a continent full of great potential and traditions. In spite of all the difficulties, the people there have a strong desire for a better future. But there are serious obstacles in their path and you know about them. The path to freedom is difficult. But I am certain that Latin America's progress will gather momentum." (*Pravda*, July 16, 1987) It is that task the Latin American people are tackling, and their culture is pursuing the same goal. The dialogue cited above conveys, in one way or another, the thoughts shared by all of us, and confirms anew that we Communists are part of the worldwide movement in defense of human life, freedom and prosperity, in defence of humanism. In fulfilling that task, Latin American revolutionary intellectuals are in the front ranks, together with all those who have no use for dogma in their thoughts and actions. □

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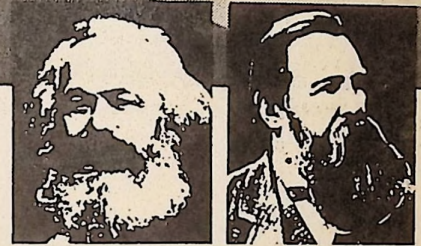
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